



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 33 – Number 9

January 2016

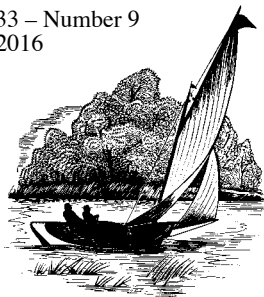
Special Features This Issue
Chasing Arthur Ransome – The Coney Island Treasure
Piloting a Canoe Instead of a Big Freighter
Experiments in Foam Boats – American Yachting in 1888
A Graphic Report on Mystic Seaport



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29 BURLEY ST., WENHAM, MA 01984 (978) 774-0906

Volume 33 – Number 9
January 2016



US subscription price is \$32 for one year. Canadian / overseas subscription prices are available upon request

Address is 29 Burley St
Wenham, MA 01984-1043
Telephone is 978-774-0906

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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

The November meeting of our local TSACA Chapter was a “field trip” to Lowell’s Boat Shop in Amesbury, Massachusetts. When friend, Capt Gnat, suggested I might want to go along on the trip (about 20 miles from here), I agreed. It had been maybe a quarter century since I last dropped by the historic site. Billed as the “longest continuing boat building shop in the USA,” Lowell’s claims to have been established by one Simeon Lowell in 1796 on the banks of the Merrimack River. The last of the Lowells sold out in the 1970s when building small traditional wooden boats proved to be financially unrewarding. When I first discovered it in the early 1980s, while pursuing my newfound interest in small wooden boats, it was owned and operated by a new owner, Jim Odell, who had always wanted to own a wooden boat shop. He was building small wooden rowing and sailing boats indigenous to the areas in what appeared to me to be a hobby business.

In the 30 or so years since then, Jim had gotten out and his son George had carried on when the shop became affiliated with the nearby Newburyport Custom House Maritime Museum, operating as a “working museum.” Later on the shop was recognized as a National Historic Landmark under yet another change of ownership. Today it operates as “A National Landmark and working museum dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the art and craft of wooden boat building, continuing to build our full line of dories and skiffs for oar, sail or power” (www.lowellsboatshop.com).

So this was where we headed that evening and all of this introduction is by way of leading into my main topic for this commentary, clutter. Yep, clutter. One of the most common aspects of the boat shops I have visited over all these years doing this magazine was the clutter amidst which the builders worked. My own shops, the original 12’x24’ one in the barn set up in 1956 (when Jane and I bought our place from my parents) in which to work on my motorcycles, and the 12’x24’ boat shop annex added on in 1978 to house my entry into wooden boats, have always been cluttered, and as you might envision, now a half century plus later, the clutter has assumed what I view as historic proportions.

But this is as nothing compared to Lowell’s. I recalled from my visit 30 years or so ago that it had acquired truly historic clutter, going back over 200 years. The building is the typical New England wooden frame structure with additions added on over the

years without benefit of any architectural input. The most original part dates back to the early 1800s as I recall (there were some fires back then I think) and again with typical Yankee frugality, it has no frills at all, no interior wall sheathing, rows of windows looking out over the river rattling in the winter winds (it’s cold we were told), lights, wiring, structural bracing, shelving, etc, added as the years rolled by when and where needed, no interior paint of any sort, just bare boards. And full of stuff. Clutter. I loved it.

The shop has three stories. The street level is where the main boat building goes on. Upstairs is where all the piece parts for the original main product, fishing dories for the Gloucester fishing fleet, were cut out and then dropped through a large trapdoor to the main floor. Here the boats were built and then eased out through a side door and lowered to the ground down closer to the river level (the river is tidal so that had to be taken into account). The boats were then moved inside a basement level for painting and detail fitting out.

A steep set of narrow stairs leads down to this basement from the main floor with a small sign indicating that it was now the “Museum.” Befitting this role, the rather cramped basement space is set up with several old boats from the earlier 1900s, a demo dory under construction, some old documents under glass and old photos and drawings lining the walls. These are surrounded by an incredible clutter of other artifacts leaned against the walls and heaped on the floor and in some of the boats, severely limiting walkabout space for visitors. Much of that clutter was really old stuff from way back, like hundreds of pattern pieces hanging from beams. The wall near the door to the river was bearded with paint beaten from brushes for ever so many years, a couple of inches thick.

But the floor near that door was the most enduring form of clutter. At first it looked like some sort of mottled linoleum, but it proved to be paint, up to a 2” thick layer laid down over 200 years or more like some sort of lava flow. A larger chunk had been broken off to serve as an artifact, a sort of archeological cross section. Way down near the bottom was a pinkish layer. When it had hit the floor the dories were being painted pink, white lead paint doctored with red brick dust from the then nearby brick works.

Well, this all demonstrated clearly to me that clutter is a long established honored tradition in boat shops and those of us who continue to practice this form of workspace management are carrying the flag into the future.

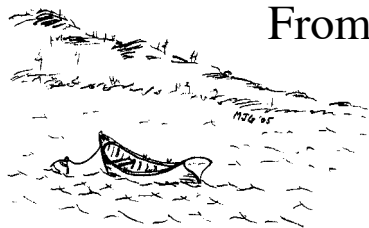
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On the Cover...

Steve Withe made his foam hulled kayak to be the “perfect” boat for his parents but when he told his dad about *Sawfish*, dad was sure he wouldn’t want it. Steve had to tell him to wait and see once he had a chance to paddle it. When Steve did get him into *Sawfish*, turns out dad loved it, as we can see in the cover photo. Lots more on Steve’s foam boat building starts on page 30.



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman
Constantwaterman.com

Now that my latest book is published, I finally have time to tell you a salty yarn. *More Landmarks You Must Visit in Southeast Connecticut* includes historical sketches and pen and ink illustrations of museums, libraries, sailing vessels, Colonial houses, bridges, and waterfalls in my part of the world. Next time you come to visit, buy a copy so I can continue to feed and clothe my boat. There. So much for commerce. Now for my yarn.

Sitting down to a breakfast of oatmeal and raisins aboard *MoonWind* at Shennecossett Yacht Club in Pine Island Sound, it's 0812 and it remains foggy and misty. Forecast calls for sunbeams and 50°, but what do they know?

I got underway from West Cove in Noank about 1130 yesterday only to find little of either wind or visibility. Well, what would you expect on a winter's day when the temperature is in the 40's and the seals are basking shamelessly in the nude? I motored out past Mouse Island and hauled up my larger genoa. My plan was to sail west to the Connecticut River, land of my misspent youth, ascend as far as Hadlyme where I grew up, and anchor for a couple of days of rest and elaboration. I'd even brought my kayak to do some exploring. I had my wetsuit, plenty of grub, some reading material, my camera, and an empty notebook in which to record more lies for my dotting readers.

What the forecast neglected to mention was visibility, or lack thereof. At noon time I could see about three miles, and as I almost made progress against the tide I thought I would probably see almost anything larger than a submarine before I ran it under. Besides, thought I, I have my GPS. I switched it on and waited for it to greet all those handy satellites whirling about the earth. And waited. And waited. Meanwhile, I admired Groton Long Point for most of an hour while I debated raising my main and shaking out my winter's reef. Having both sails would assure me of making twice my forward progress, a half knot instead of a quarter. With both my sails, my long Johns and my dish towel flying it shouldn't take me over a week to make the sixteen miles to the Breakwater Light at the mouth of the Connecticut.

Then the gale abated. My genoa slatted listlessly; my wind vane twirled carelessly at the masthead. With a sigh I started my motor. I dropped the genny and secured it with a bungee. The storm might resume momentarily and I needed to be ready. Then I set a course due west and headed for... all that white stuff. I checked my non-cooperative GPS. It smiled at me and showed me its screen with a dozen satellites spinning merrily just above *MoonWind's* mast. But none of them chose to come down to play with us. (Three weeks later I learned from an online chat room how to reboot my GPS so the satellites would cooperate).

The visibility slowly diminished from three miles to two; then to one. I would need to hurry. I revved my motor until I was making six knots and set a course for nearby Pine Island Sound. At two miles I could nearly discern Pine Island, a darker mass disappearing beneath a dull white mantle. A misty rain descended and I needed to wipe my glasses every few minutes. Fortunately, I'd chosen to wear my wetsuit.

At least I could see all the lobster pots and their tiny wakes in the tide. I soon could hear the bell at the harbor mouth, barely activated by the ebbing tide. Fishers Island Sound resembled the local millpond. If you haven't seals in your local millpond I can always ship you a couple.

By two o'clock, fourteen hundred to those of you who sail, I had shoved the dreary fog aside and snuck into Pine Island Sound. I found my summer slip at my friendly yacht club and tucked *MoonWind* into it. It was strangely quiet and deserted and eerie as the fog closed in about me, the only boat in the water. Pine Island, four hundred yards away, gradually disappeared. When the walkway lights came on I could just discern the end of the pier.

I gladly sat down to belated lunch and read a detective novel. I made a cup of hot coffee as my reward for not being stupid enough to continue into the fog without GPS. Ah, decadence! In no time at all, it was time for dinner. I took a constitutional up the pier between meals and watched a loon on her way back from the fish market.

The temperature dropped into the upper 30's. I put on my parka and read and ate and read and ate some more. I tucked into my sleeping bag in my long Johns, sweater, and watch cap and read some more till all the mermaids came home.



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You write to us about...

Opinions...

Pack Canoe Advantages

I'm in the process of obtaining some flax to use as a boat skin. Now I need a natural resin to waterproof the boat, but I can't find a good one in the US. The Brits have one but do not have a license to send it abroad.

Swift canoe has not one double paddle canoe but several. They call the craft "pack boats," which I prefer to double paddle canoes (<http://www.swiftcanoe.com/#!packboat/c1gum>). Hornbeck seems to have dozens of models now (<http://www.hornbeckboats.com/boats.php>). Placid Boat Works probably builds the fastest ones (<http://placidboatworks.com/>). And Slipstream Water Craft are making less expensive 13' boats (http://www.slipstreamwatercraft.com/Slipstream_Watercraft_2/Impulse_13.html).

So I conclude that the Wee Lassie is finally growing up. Maybe people will see the advantages of pack canoes over many kayaks.

Hilary Russell, Berkshire Boat Building School, Sheffield, MA

Never Felt I Was Taking a Chance

As usual, I enjoyed your "Commentary," especially your thoughts on "safety." In the course of more than 60 years of cruising the Maine and Maritimes coast, I never felt that I was taking a chance, in the sense of a gamble with the safety of my family, my vessel or myself. I won't say that I didn't think about conditions, etc, but never set sail with a "what the hell" attitude.

Your reference to Shackleton and "safety" does remind me of other true adventurers, and I'm thinking of the Lewis and Clark expedition. After it was all over and Lewis was, presumably, settled comfortably in the Midwest, he committed suicide on a trip to visit the President. The skipper of the *Beagle*, when Darwin made his staggering observations that form the foundation of you know what, was another young guy, Robert (later Admiral) Robert Fitzroy. Fitzroy was no slouch as a scientist, he invented the aneroid barometer, among other contributions, but he parted company with Dar-

win on evolution. When Darwin was touring England selling his theory, Fitzroy was also touring to tell why he thought Darwin was wrong to deny creationism. But Darwin won a bigger audience and eventually Fitzroy also committed suicide.

My point in linking monumental adventures with suicide is that the achievements of Merriwether Lewis and Fitzroy were so far beyond anyone's comprehension, the individuals themselves couldn't readjust to a more normal, pedestrian way of life. Today, however, that type of cosmic adventure is no longer possible and therefore neither is the subsequent collapse and depression.

"Safety" is everywhere. Bicycle helmets testify to it. In junior high school I was practicing jumping my front bicycle wheel while pedaling to visit my friend Billy Barck, because I'd have to clear a curb in front of his house. Who wore helmets? On the last practice, the front wheel dropped off and my visit to Billy's house was changed, but I'm still here. Yet who's to say in what mental condition?

Bill Sayres, Largo, FL

Projects...

Matching Model Building



I hope to build a number of model boats to match the 35 small boats I built as an amateur boat builder. Selected models have been donated to charities, local small museums and a few were sold. My favorite models are

of Chesapeake deadrise work boats or anything unusual: Civil War Ferry Gun Boat, Norfolk & Portsmouth Ferry, late 1800 Torpedo boat, Viking boat, 1932 Snipe sailboat from *MAIB* and a 48" five sail RC motor-sailer. I build from pictures using 1/32" birch plywood plank on frame construction.

Bob Guess, Chesapeake, VA, bobboatbuilder@hotmail.com

This Magazine...

Heavy Canoe!

Page 45 of the November issue has a picture with the caption "Greg Nolan and Deborah Gardner paddling the 590lb Old Town." Amazing amount of freeboard for a canoe weighing 590 pounds!

Nick Fast, Hilton Head Island, SC

A Flood of Memories

Thank you for your continued publication of *MAIB*. At 84 I find it sure brings back a flood of memories.

Ed Stagis, Plainville, CT.

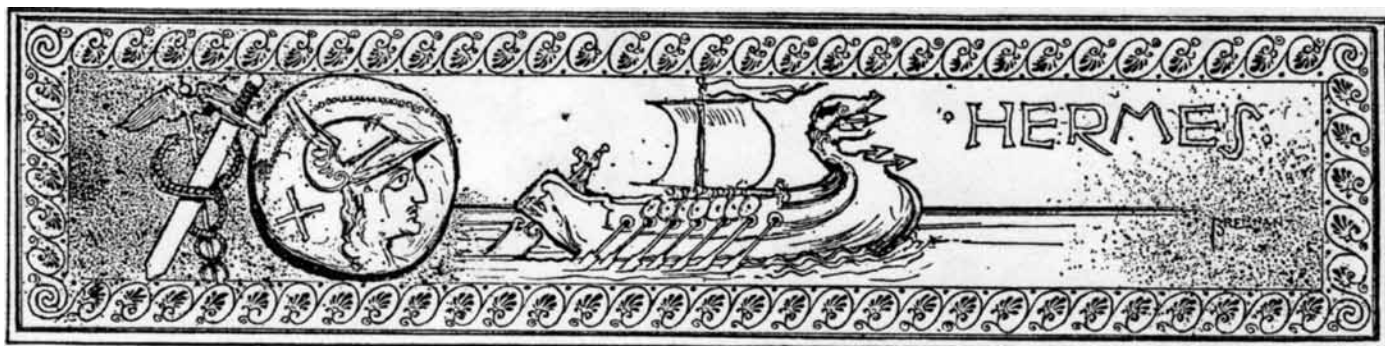
With Sadness and Regret

It is with much sadness and regret that I inform you that I will not be renewing my subscription to *MAIB*. My eyes, as well as other things, have succumbed to time. I want to thank you and all of your contributors for all the hours of enjoyment that *MAIB* has brought to me through the many years. *MAIB* and you are truly gems and I praise you both. My best to you.

Here is a short poem that some might "enjoy:"

Last Voyage

I cast off the mooring, that last time for me,
And quietly sailed out upon the lonely sea.
It was almost dusk on that late fall day,
As the gentle breeze carried me away.
My destination, to me unknown,
I had the feeling I was going home.
All the memories of my life passed by,
As the sun fell, ever so slowly, from the sky.
How far I traveled, I never knew,
But my journey's end was overdue.
Inside the small cove, so serene all around,
The sails were furled and the anchor down.
I gave my thanks for a life to treasure
And laid my head down to rest forever.
David Simonds, Voluntown, CT



Long before Sir Isaac Newton used it, the metaphor of “seeing further than his contemporaries” because he “stood on the shoulders of giants” was already a cliché; cliché or not, the phrase survives because it is useful. Way too often we forget those who preceded us in whatever endeavor we engage in. If you build a small craft, or go adventuring in one you have modified or built for your own use, then you are standing on the shoulders of Percy Blandford. Don’t take it on my authority, I stole it from no less than Gavin Atkin and Chuck Leinweber.

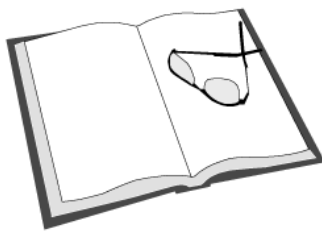
Percy Blandford (1912-2014) published 113 books (this one, posthumous, makes 114) on about everything you can imagine as far as practical skills and do it yourself (DIY) are concerned. A qualified naval architect, largely self taught, he sold over 78,000 sets of plans over his lifetime, including kayaks, canoes, dinghies, trailer sailers, powerboats and, even in the 1960s when you couldn’t get a manufactured one in Europe, surfboards! Many of Percy Blandford’s (PB) boat plans are still available from Clark Craft in New York, <http://www.clarkcraft.com/>. The plans for Lysander, a once popular 17’ cabin sailboat, are available from the Lysander owner’s group, <http://lysander-owners.org.uk/>.

PB was, at the time of his passing, probably the most senior person in the Scouting movement worldwide. For 93 years he was involved as a Wolf Cub, Boy Scout and adult leader. PB even attended the first ever World Jamboree hosted by the Boy Scouts. Not only did he train generations of Scouts and leaders, but if anyone needed to know how to make something or do something for themselves in the austere days following WWII in the UK, they probably consulted a book written by PB.

Subjects included carpentry, furniture making, blacksmithing and metal working, upholstery, net making, knife making, farm machinery, tool making, jewelry making and on and so forth. Just go onto Amazon or another book website and the list will make your head swim. And, of course, books on boating, paddle craft and small craft building will run throughout the inventory. PB also published a host of books and magazine articles in the US, using his own and pen names, a habit he got into in the UK so as to be able to publish in several DIY and woodworking magazines without his being the only name in the issue! Blandford even rated a national obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*.

PB’s dominance of the DIY world was just that, because he not only published in the Commonwealth nations, but was widely published in US DIY magazines and had many books in the catalog of TAB Books, a Pennsylvania publisher of every kind of handyman and DIY book you could imagine from the 1960s to the 1980s. TAB was later bought out by a publishing house that wanted the facilities and name but promptly dropped most of the subjects! Now they seem to only cover electronics and hi tech! I guess it made sense to someone from a business or financial standpoint, but the logic escapes me.

It appears that, after a very full life, PB’s granddaughters got him to write an autobiography when he was 95, but then he didn’t bother to publish it “because who would want to read it?” It turns out quite a few. Diane Naested, Blandford’s granddaughter, wrote a very nice foreword and had a limited number of copies printed. They may not all be gone by the time you read this, so email



Book Review

A Life Full of Hobbies

By Percy W. Blandford
Live Wire Books, Oxfordshire, UK, 2015

Reviewed by John Nystrom

her at diane.naested@gmail.com to find out. If there is no reprint by her press, maybe a first rate UK nautical publisher like Lodestar Books will take notice?

So, what of the book itself? In short, the book is a delight. PB lived a life most of us can only dream about, combining craftsmanship and adventure, but a life that, if you are reading this publication, you can identify with. Blandford’s humor is dry and self deprecating but he went through his life always seeing difficulties as opportunities and never failing to see and point out the absurdities. The writing style is personal, approachable and very readable. You don’t usually expect that from someone who gets classified as a “technical writer.”

I once had a professor who divided people into two categories, “lumpers” and “splitters.” People either lumped everything they observed into a whole, seeing the big picture but tending to ignore or downplay the discrete details, or they naturally divided everything they observed into its discrete parts, noting every one but often overlooking the big picture or how they all worked or fitted together. When I read *A Life Full of Hobbies* I got the impression that Percy Blandford was the unusual person who was both a lumpers and a splitter. The chapters of this autobiography are short and readable, focused, supposedly on a single subject but relate easily into a single whole, the life of a man who seems supremely content. PB doesn’t seem to lose sight of the whole in the details.

Criticisms and questions are few. PB refers in the text to a “third” appendix, listing all of his watercraft designs, so I assume other appendices might also list his books or publications, but there are no appendices or index at all. The text ends at 312 pages of just that, text. An email from Diane Naested, Percy’s granddaughter, who moved the book from dream to reality, said that the appendices were there until the final galleys but were removed at the last minute. No loss to most readers, but a painful wound to a geek like me. That choice probably relates to the length of the book which, at over 300 pages, will seem about right to many, but I was enjoying PB’s life so much that I could have enjoyed even more.

My last question to Diane Naested relates to a curious coincidence that I noticed. I wrote a book review for *Messing About in*

Boats (MAIB) back in 2013 for a reprinting of Nevil Shute’s 1960 novel *Trustee from the Toolroom* (OK, I know that only about two of our readers, if that, will recall that) which tells a story of an ordinary machinist who writes articles for DIY magazines and who is thrust into a journey halfway around the world, including part of it on a homemade sailboat with no engine. Shute was an engineer by trade, turned popular novelist (he had several best selling novels in the 1950s and 1960s, often with some technical detail, but now mostly forgotten). The parallels between the hero of *Trustee From the Toolroom* and the life of Percy Blandford are striking, but not definitive. I have a hard time believing that Shute would have been unaware of PB and his numerous articles and books on technical subjects. Diane doesn’t know if Blandford and Shute were acquainted at any level, but she is going to read the novel and give me her opinion (and maybe even dig into it a bit, I hope).

So much for quibbles, this is a wonderful last book from someone to whom everyone in our community of small craft builders and adventurers owes a great deal. Get hold of a copy soon, as the printing is limited. And again, some publisher of nautical titles should jump on this one and push it out to a large audience (maybe with the appendices?). Opportunity knocks.

<http://intheboatshed.net/2015/08/27/percy-blandfords-autobiography-is-on-sale-now/http://intheboatshed.net/?s=blandford>

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Chasing Arthur Ransome

Keith Muscott

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*, Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

An affectionate and irreverent log of a Ransome-themed kayak trip around Coniston Water

(Above) Coniston Water. The steam yacht *Gondola*, originally built in 1859, renovated in 1979, and now run as a ferry by the National Trust. She is seen pausing at a jetty below Thurston not far from Brantwood, the home of John Ruskin, who famously admired her serpentine figurehead. She was one of the inspirations for Captain Flint's houseboat in Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*.

I drifted down her port side, snapping furiously, to be challenged by her skipper (who even at this point is fixing me with a steely stare):

'Sir, do you know our propeller is still slowly turning?' To which the only seamanlike response was, 'No, but if you sing it I'm sure I'll be able to play along.'

I thanked him kindly for his concern and got out fast.

ARRIVED AT CONISTON
a day before the DCA rally on
April 17 and launched my kayak
at 10:30 by the Waterhead jetty.

I was not staying at the hotel, but I cleared it with the management, who were as charming and unfussy as ever. The weather was calm and largely overcast, but this peaceful day was a satisfying prelude to a great sailing weekend on the 18th-19th

I did not have a plan until I looked around the head of the lake and started paddling south. I had the day to myself, so I decided to cruise right round its shores and note any reminders of Arthur Ransome that hove into view.

The idea must have been born during an early morning visit to St Andrew's churchyard in Coniston to reflect by Ruskin's grave and those of the Collingwood family, whom Ransome considered as close as his own.

He lost his father as a teenager. William Gershom Collingwood was an inspiring replacement and his children became Ransome's extra brother and

sisters. Their mother Edith was no less influential in Ransome's life, and he came to address her as 'Aunt'.

First I looked at the old boathouses at Kirby Quay near the head of the lake. One or both were used by Oscar Gnosspeliüs, geologist and surveyor, who returned to the Lakes from mining and railway construction in South Africa in the early 1900s to design and

build seaplanes and to prospect on the Coniston fells with WG Collingwood for copper and slate – and then to marry Collingwood's daughter Barbara. Ransome used his mining knowledge in *Pigeon Post* (1936) and he appeared in it as the character 'Squashy Hat'. Their daughter Janet modelled for the drawing of Nancy – and kept her boat at Kirby Quay.

Kirby Quay. The boathouse on the left is still in use, but the paint has peeled from the board on the wall of the second one. Here history glows through the patina of age. These venerable slate buildings are as much a natural part of the shoreline now as the rocks and trees. The wharf suggests they were once used in lake trade.





Lanehead can be seen above the boathouses, partly hidden by the trees. The boathouses have been improved over the years, notably when the house became Lanehead Outdoor Education Centre. Behind the trees to the right is Bank Ground Farm ('Holly Howe' in Ransome-land) with a field running down to the water across which Roger 'tacked' in *Swallows and Amazons*, '... to the farm where at the gate his patient mother was awaiting him'.

From 1933 the Gnosspeliuses lived in a farmhouse, High Hollin Bank, off the Hawkshead Road. It is within easy reach of the boathouses and the old Collingwood family home of Lanehead.

Gnosspelius and others carried out experiments with their seaplanes between 1910 and 1912 on Windermere and had plans to develop a factory at Cockshott Point, Bowness. An interesting footnote to this story concerns the owner of Hill Top farm in Sawrey, who campaigned successfully from early in 1912 to stop the building plans and the testing, which was disturbing the peace. Her peace. That skilled campaigner and guardian of the lake was Beatrix Potter.

I set my course down the east side of the lake, which has points of interest appearing at regular intervals. I closed with the boathouses below Lanehead (the middle one was offered for sale recently at £150,000) and followed the shore below Thurston, another big lakeside house that became an outdoor activities centre, then Brantwood, followed by Fir

as a handy lunchtime stop (see p36).

For the Collingwoods, Fir Island was the halfway point *en route* to Peel Island, a special place of pilgrimage. For Arthur Ransome later in his life it marked the position of The Heald, the house he bought in 1940, with seventeen acres plus a considerable stretch of shoreline, a place 'I have been a bit in love with since the age of nine,' he wrote to his mother; but his wife hated it, and soon they had promised it to a stranger they met in a pub to be sold at an agreed price after the war. And they did just that. So much

for the romance of the Lakes when set against domestic harmony and the formidable Evgenia Shelepina.

I was unable to paddle through the narrow channel between Fir Island and the Heald shoreline as the water was low in the lake and the bottom is foul with branches and leaf mould,

(Below) The Heald, on the other side of the eastern lakeside road behind the wall. Note all the 'keep off' signs. Fir island is unseen, immediately to the right. I saw The Heald was for sale when I drove along the road three days later.





significance for the Collingwoods – more than for AR.

WG Collingwood excavated and found the remains of Viking and mediaeval settlements. The Collingwoods first met the Ransomes here when Arthur was twelve and they picnicked together.

Ransome became very possessive about 'his' island years later after he had achieved world fame. If he saw others visiting it he would make his way there to see what they were about. Taqui Altounyan held a much healthier view: '... the great quality of this enchanted island – anyone landing alone and quiet can, until interrupted, feel he owns it.'

By then relations had soured between him and the Altounyans – Collingwood's daughter Dora and their children, who had been his muses initially. At one time the Ransomes had wanted to add Mavis ('Titty') but later disagreement grew, ostensibly from an argument over the children's education. In her book *Chimes From A Wooden Bell*, the wise and perceptive Taqui Altounyan, oldest of the children, summed up the complex relationship between her father Ernest and Arthur Ransome: 'In its simple

so after two attempts I went outside it.

I knew The Heald had a wooden jetty when Ransome bought it, but I was looking on the wrong side of the island for any remnants of it, I think, judging by the photograph above of Evgenia inspecting Ransome's favourite dinghy *Coch y Bonddhu*, which he, always the fisherman first, named after a wet fly that imitates the June bug or cockchafer – or *coch y bonddhu* – a beetle common in our Celtic fringes.

I wonder whether he ever found the literal meaning of the name, which a down to earth translator might give as 'red with a black arse' – not a name I'd rush to paint on a boat. And judging by the creases in her lug sail I think *Cochy's*

sailmaker should have been keel-hauled. No wonder Roger Altounyan could beat him hands down racing on the lake in older, heavier boats.

Past Fir Island, Peel Island is seen clearly, a steep-sided hedgehog of an place with only a couple of access points. Ransome adopted a number of its features to create his composite 'Wild Cat Island'. It had enormous



(Left) Always cheerfully mispronounced as 'Cocky Bondoo', *Coch y Bonddhu* is still among the most popular wet flies deployed for trout in early summer, especially in North Wales. (Below) The 'Secret Harbour' on Peel Island, monopolised by two Canadian canoes lying with cross beams. I've shown a long view that takes in its beautiful position against the hills north and west of the lake. It is usually shot from the top of the inshore rock to the left or from up in the trees. WG Collingwood imagined the island as a galleon towing a boat – the rock in the left foreground.



terms, their suspicion of each other began with their competing for the love of the Collingwoods when they were young men.' For Arthur had proposed to Barbara and her mother Dora in turn.

Many books have been written on Ransome, but there are just a handful I really like. An unusual one is John Berry's *Discovering Swallows and Ransomes*. It was a major achievement for him to write his autobiography and record how close he came to Arthur and Evgenia and the other leading players in this saga of families, from the moment he became determined to seek out Ransome at the age of twelve.

He suffers from an extreme form of dyslexia, and his book was helped into print through the editing ability of Jim Andrews, author and ex-DCA member, whose work I celebrated recently in the journal on the occasion of his retiring from our ranks.

John Berry gives us the unvarnished truth, not the mythology, which is appropriate for an illustrator and successful portrait painter. At one point he is on Peel Island with Roger Altounyan and his family. They are picnicking on the top of the eastern cliff, the traditional area 'where five generations of Collingwoods had boiled kettles', not the campsite. Roger's two sons climb a tree which is leaning out high above the rocks and water. True to the 'Swallows' spirit of self-reliance nothing is said, though the children are watched closely:

'Anyway, when they were safely down, Judy (Berry) remarked, "That was very "Arthur Ransome". At this, young Martin asked, to our astonishment, "What is a Ransome, Daddy?"

Roger replied, 'Arthur Ransome is someone who wrote a book about children on an island.' Nothing more was said!

Around the corner, southeast of Peel Island, there are unique little harbours for small boats in the area mapped as High and Low Peel Near by the Ordnance Survey, as is shown by this double parking lot for boats sailed by couples not on speaking terms (*right*), with people just discernible on the cliff-top picnic place on Peel Island to the left.

South from Peel Island the lake closes in to give a number of inlets and shoreline 'nebs' to make life interesting. I even paddled into the large artificial



My trip was in early Spring so the trees were unburdened by leaves. The scenery is uncharacteristic stark for the Lakes, but this means that you can see clearly the new 'Lighthouse Tree' Planted by Ta Altounyan with TARS (The Arthur Ransome Society) in 1994 to replace the old dead one. It's the conifer in evidence in this shot of the northern point of Peel Island and has now come of age at 21 ye

over the occupants: boats and people. They seemed to think I had suddenly dropped out of a tree. Twenty years ago this was a little landlocked pond.

The exit to the lake, the River Crake, is not immediately obvious, but the reeds and shoaling water point the way.

This is classic pike fishing terrain, and I was not surprised to see a fisherman's boardwalk laid over the boggy ground to a stance right at the water's edge on the eastern bank. Perfect for casting a spinner twenty or thirty yards out, with every retrieve a period of tingling expectation.

I was heading for Allen Tarn – 'Octopus Lagoon' –

when I came upon a little blue notice on the western bank.

Apparently there is a gentlemen's agreement between canoeists and fishermen that paddling here ceases on March 31st. I was about three weeks too late this year, so, wishing to be thought a gentleman, I turned the little boat around in the beck and paddled back to the lake, with the view spread before me like a feast



The leg back to Coniston along the western shore was less interesting, no doubt made worse by tiredness setting in. I had forgotten my gloves, so the odd blister was appearing on my wet hands.

Mainly the shore lacks interesting waymarks, and as you reach one point of land the next seems miles away. A big sea kayak, paddled with long measured strokes, overtook me. I kept up with him for about a hundred yards, then sensibly remembered that mine is only 13ft LOA and a lot less on the waterline. Not a good size for a cruising kayak. I settled back and recovered my breath. Time to think about a bigger boat? It took a while to bring Peel on to the starboard beam, and ages to level with Fir Island. Shortly after that the old familiar landmarks came into view.

It was 15:30 when I hauled out at Waterhead. That meant little, as I had poked about in bays, stopped to take photographs and paddled three or four times around Peel Island. About 13 miles in total, 12.5 had it been a straightforward trip with no detours. I had guessed that I was mostly travelling at what I call 'a purposeful walking pace with no sense of urgency' and it hadn't been much off that.

While I was picking up the car and bringing it to the lakeside to roof-rack the boat, I realised that starting and finishing at the Waterhead jetty was entirely appropriate. As a young man Ransome met the Collingwoods while he was staying in Coniston village – at least once at a boarding house 'where I did not have to cook my own breakfast', which is now the Yewdale Hotel, scene of many a DCA gathering.

After a fleeting encounter by Coppermines Beck and a single shy visit to Lanehead, Ransome returned the following year and got closer to the family over a few weeks, sailing with WG's two eldest daughters and their Austrian cousin Hilde. After some discussion with her husband, 'Dorrie' Collingwood suggested that he stay at Lanehead in their son Robin's room until he returned from school. AR gave notice at his lodgings.

That was the moment when his life paused, hovering on the brink of new meaning and pregnant with possibility. He must have seen it all clearly. He collected his modest luggage – a couple of bags and his typewriter – and took it

in two trips to the Waterhead jetty. Then he watched the three young women row over from the other side of the lake to fetch him to Lanehead.

Another Arthur, who was rowed in an evening calm across a different water to Avalon, The Fortunate Isle, with three queens wearing crowns of gold, could hardly have felt more profoundly the change in his destiny.

Arthur Ransome was to fall in love with the two daughters in turn and maintain a deep friendship with one, Barbara, for the rest of his life. The effect of the Collingwood family on him and his career over the years was incalculable: 'The whole of the rest of my life has been happier because of them ... It was in an Arcadian ecstasy that I spent those weeks making my first book ready for the press.' They had confidence in his ability, whereas his own parents had never ceased to be anxious and disappointed in him.

Years later the daughter of Dora, the other Collingwood oarswoman, was to rush into the lake with her schoolfriend by the Lanehead boathouses and swim across to the *Gondola* pier, close to Waterhead. Later she burst into her grandfather's study to tell him what they had done, and WG, to his eternal credit, merely spread a map on the desk and told her solemnly that they had swum 440 yards – exactly a quarter of a mile; then he shared in their celebration.

Three days later I decided to visit Rusland Church on my way home. It was hard to find, as most village signs

hereabouts seem to have been removed. I got out in a lovely place and asked where I was.

'This here's Spark Bridge, fust ironwuks in t' country; it's in t' Domesday Beuk. Wheer's tha garn? Rusland? It's a bugger of a place to git till and weel spread oot when thoo does git theer.'

It is weel spread oot, but I found St Paul's church. Arthur had chosen well – no plot in busy little Coniston for him and Evgenia. Rusland seems to have been quietly regarding its own beauty since the last flush of affluent Victorian visitors sponsored the rebuilding of local mansion houses and farms, and the parish room (1890) after the church (1868). The Ransomes were not hard to find, in the southeast corner under a Corsican pine. Mary, the wife of the painter George Romney lies close by, as does his son John.

In his book *The Last Englishman: The Double Life of Arthur Ransome*, Roland Chambers says that if Coniston Water and Windermere ever joined, Ransome would be lying in an underwater Rusland Vale, looking up at passing sailboats, perfectly content.

To my mind that is a waste of a good conceit: St. Paul's stands on its own rocky eminence like a castle. If that flood ever came the church would be left crowning a small but impressive island and the grave would not be under water at all. Sooner or later this atoll would need a name. 'Avalon' would sound noble and grand, but I think the erratic genius lying there would prefer 'Wild Cat Island'. KM



More Revealing Words from Taqui Altounyan

On the genesis of *Swallows and Amazons*

'... I think we inadvertently provided the spark that lit up a whole bonfire of irresistible memories. Arthur always seemed to need a small grain of reality to get him going.'

On the characters in the books

'He was snowed under by requests from children: are they real?' – I'm still trying to answer that one ...'

'... I do find the obedient and well-behaved 'Swallows' a bit priggish!'

'I'm happy in my old age to be 'Captain John', and 'Captain Nancy' if required. Captain John, Captain Nancy, Taqui Altounyan, Barbara Stephens – it's all one to me! ... (but) I must not let facts crush imagination in a work of fiction: there must be room for all shades of truth.'

On learning to sail

'I can't remember being taught to sail. Once I had plunged into the lake with all my clothes on to prove I really could swim, I was allowed in *Mavis* on my own, and I must have learned by watching the grown-ups. I don't remember anyone shouting to me across the water. Nautical terms had always seemed a bit unnecessary to me. (Now there's a confession!)

Read more at: <http://www.allthingsransome.net/>

(Below) April 9–10, 2011. Coniston Water. SOPHIE NEVILLE names and launches the rebuilt *Swallow* (the boat used in the film, not the original) at the same time as a scheduled DCA rally. Report and six photographs were in DC 211 (Colin Firth)



Sophie Neville published her story of filming Ransome's classic (1973/4) as an e-book first (*left above*), but the demand soon led to a hard copy (*right, above*).

I think she should have retained her watercolour map of Coniston Water for the cover design of the paper book too: she is clearly a talented artist. It is difficult to imagine a better choice of actor for 'Titty'. She captures the sensitive, spiritual, artistic – but feisty – personality of the character. This book tells an entertaining story and there are serious insights along the way into the actors' personalities, the filming techniques of the time, her fellow child actors, the book *Swallows & Amazons* and the Ransomes themselves. My eye was immediately caught by the interventions made by Evgenia Ransome, who was an essential adviser to the film.

She said forcibly that the actors must be 'typical English' schoolchildren – blonde and fresh-faced, which might have been innocuous had she not tried to bully the Altounyan children into never speaking publicly about the books or the role of her husband in their lives – or theirs in his. (Ransome had died six years before this, in 1967.)

In particular she wrote a letter to the papers attacking 'Titty' viciously after she had reminisced in print about her childhood days at Lanehead. Titty then gave as good as she'd got and refused to be intimidated, but Evgenia's loud insistence on fair-haired actors reminded me that by the end of their quarrel with the family both Ransomes were referring to the children patronisingly as 'the little Armenians'. Not that it matters at all, but in fact the children were equal parts Armenian, Northern Irish, English – and their grandfather WG Collingwood was half-Swiss. I think this dark side of the Ransomes came from Evgenia principally. Ransome referred to his wife only half-jokingly as 'The Boss' or 'The Critic on the Hearth', and as he became old and mentally as well as physically frail, he became, sadly, afraid of her, as his biographer Hugh Brogan notes.

On a lighter note, I was pleased to see that Sophie Neville clarifies the origin of the family nickname 'Titty' for Mavis Altounyan.

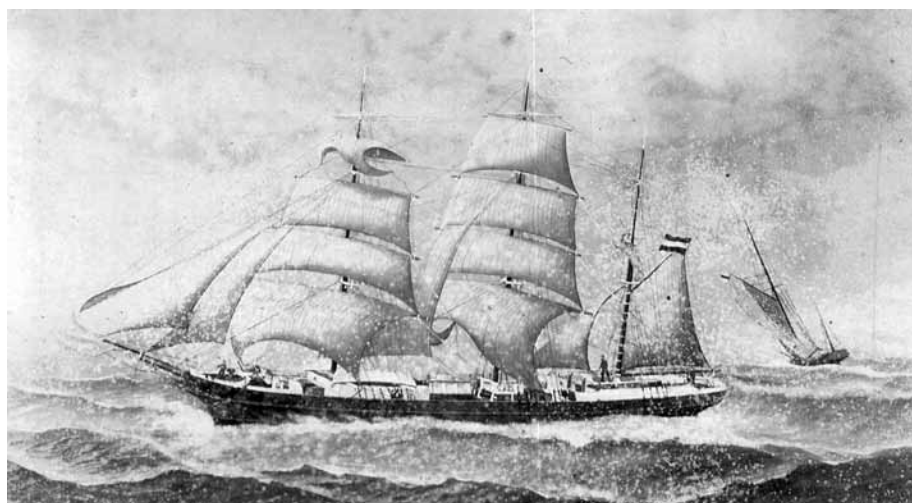
In the 1890s there was a popular children's book of tales by Joseph Jacobs – who also popularised the anthropomorphic *Three Little Pigs* – called *Titty and Tatty*, starring two mice. This book had obviously been available at Lanehead. Mavis and her older sister were called Titty and Tatty when they were out sailing together. (In the next film version, being made at this very moment, the name 'Titty' will be replaced by 'Tatty', believe it or not!) KM

I adored my paternal grandfather, Capt. Willi Zollitsch, who retired to the same small town in northern Germany where I grew up. While in high school, I visited him about every weekend, when I wasn't away with our gymnastics team competing or just having fun bike camping. We talked real stuff, boat-ing that is. He was a great story-teller.

He had left school at age 15, because he felt he had learned everything he needed to know to become a sailor. And that's what he did. He shipped out on big windjammers like the *Minna Helene* (1892-1894) in the saltpeter trade around Cape Horn to Chile, or around Africa in the wool trade to Australia. At age 19 he passed his skipper's exam. His last assignment (1944-45, World War II) was piloting freighters through the minefields in the approaches to the Kiel Canal and the port of Kiel, where, as he told me sheepishly, he first learned real accurate navigation.



Capt. Willi Zollitsch (1923).



Minna Helene (1892-1894).

So you can see how little boy Reinhard (me) wanted to follow in his footsteps and become a sailor also and see the world and all the oceans, especially since that little boy had spent much of the first six years of his life in air-raid shelters and basements in the submarine harbor of Kiel, Germany, during the war years (1939-1945). He wanted to get out of there. Who can blame him?

Piloting a Canoe Instead of a Big Freighter

Or: The Consequences of Growing Up

Color-Blind

By Reinhard Zollitsch
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But schooling started with a problem, which I had not paid much attention to. "He may not be ready for school. He does not even know his colors," I heard teachers say. Nonsense! I saw colors fine, I just did not always know what they were called, especially red and green and all colors in between, like brown, orange, pink, purple, etc. It was suggested that I might be color-blind. Ridiculous! I did not live in a black-and-white world. I did see the world in "living color", only some colors did not speak to me. Big deal!

In those days, practically nobody, not even the medical profession, knew much about that "problem" or what to do about it. They had much bigger problems to deal with, after World War II. So I ignored it also and charted my life around these two colors. I felt safe in blues and grays. Let others wear those garish colors, like red, orange, pink, purple as well as "giftgrün" (poison green), as it was known around our neck of the woods in northern Germany. (I now think there must have been numerous people like me who were uncomfortable around green, i.e. who were color-blind without knowing or admitting it.)

And when it came to art classes in school, I made sure my Mom would buy me crayon and paint sets with color names on them. I did fine "painting by numbers/labels". I never really told my family or friends about my color issue, and to this day, most of them do not know, understand, or believe that I am color-blind.

In my later advanced chemistry classes, however, I did very poorly in my lab tests that relied on color identifications. I still did not say anything to the teachers, because the post-war German world was not ready for it. So I took my penalty (grade-wise) and made up for my poor lab performance with the theoretical part of the tests.

After high school graduation in 1959 I also failed the test for the newly formed Ger-

man Army/Navy, a test we all had to take. I did not care much about why I failed, but failure there meant that I was not fit to be drafted and could commence my University of Kiel studies in English and American literature, plus philosophy and physical education as my two minor subjects. I liked that. But after rupturing my Achilles tendon, I was off the University gymnastics team and dropped the sport altogether, replacing it with more sedentary sports, like rowing and sailing.

I was rudely reminded of my color issue, when I secured a well-paying weekend job with the "Holiday on Ice" show in Kiel. I helped with the set-up, but when I was asked to man one of the big color lights to highlight the star skaters during the evening show, I broke out in cold sweat. That could have been a disaster, or a comedy, or both. I quickly looked around at what other jobs needed to be done and suggested that I help hang the curtain from the high scaffolding – no problem, being a former gymnast.

At about that point of my studies, my career decision became very pressing. I decided to see one more time whether a maritime career was doable after all. The lure of becoming a captain on a freighter was still there. So I got a summer job on a 1,000 ton freighter, mostly hauling raw pulp sheets from northern Sweden (in the Baltic Sea) to the paper mills in Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Antwerp (along the North Sea). I worked eight hours on deck and had the night watch at the helm from midnight to 4:00am. I did fine most of the time, but got real sweaty in tight situations, like steering through the Kiel Canal or up the Schelde River to Antwerp with all its lights, white, red and green. But since most of them were either solid lights or blinked a certain pattern, I had my own way of identifying them. It did not help, though, that the Schelde pilot only spoke Flemish, no German, and very poor English. Still, nobody noticed that I was color-blind.



R.Z. on lookout on freighter, *Siegerland*, Baltic Sea, 1961.

I was bathed in cold sweat, though, and decided then and there that I was never going to be able to command a big freighter safely and with confidence, across the oceans and into distant ports as a captain. That dream

was over. So were all other jobs that relied on color identification, like an airplane pilot, chemist and most other engineering professions and lab jobs, well, almost any other good job, except for maybe a TEACHER, not in the sciences, but in a more esoteric field, like a foreign language and literature. (Please don't tell me the old adage about "those who can, do; those who can't, teach." However, in my specific case that would be true.)

OK, that was it! Teaching is an honorable profession, wouldn't you say? And foreign languages would require travel, wouldn't it? And how about upgrading it to "college professor", and a Dr. in front of the name? How does that sound? Nobody in my family had ever done that before. My always much smarter older sister had become a grade school teacher, and my equally much smarter younger brother a high school teacher. (Am I suffering from "middle-child-syndrome"? Naah...They were just better with colors.) And now I was going to top them all as a university professor with a Ph.D. Why not? It was definitely going to be a challenge. I had to have a plan, buckle up and knuckle down.

I applied for a graduate assistantship at three American universities in 1962. My only credentials were my university grades and being on a national scholarship, since my English professor refused to write me a letter of recommendation. He wanted me to help him with the index of his new book, rather than go to the US. I told him I would get the assistantship without his help and send him a postcard, which I did. The Hamburg harbor-master, on the other hand, was more helpful, getting me on a coal freighter from Rotterdam to Norfolk, Virginia, which cost me the grand total of \$25, just right for a penniless graduate student.

I even had a choice as to where I wanted to study, and did fine as a graduate student in English and American literature at the University of Maine. I was invited to join the graduate degree program, and eventually got my Master's degree, after only two years, being a part-time student. I had to earn my living teaching German part-time in the Foreign Language Department. During that time I also got to know an incredibly smart, sweet and beautiful young girl/woman...We got engaged and married when I received my MA diploma, in 1964. When Nancy finished her studies, I went back to Graduate School in Massachusetts and got another MA and a Ph.D. But this time it was in German, my new foreign language, since I had decided to stay in the US. The University of Maine wanted me back, and I was delighted to do so.

My color problems, however, did not go away. Nancy was surprised that I always wore the same colors, dark blue and gray. She also avoided reds and greens, in order to please me, and began to wear more blue and gray too, but admitted to me later that she felt cast back into the American Civil War color scheme. (Don't worry; as soon as she understood the problem, she returned to wearing more cheerful colors.) I, on the other hand, did not fully appreciate her sexy pink nightgowns. (To me they always looked "dirty white" or like a gray sweat-shirt; I'm afraid I even told her that --- sorry, sorry, oh so sorry!)

It took me quite some time to admit my color problem to my lovely young bride. She was understandably shocked about what I thought about her alluring pink nighties, but we eventually could laugh it off and talk about

my "problem". Bottom line: we decided to have me see an American eye doctor.

I failed the red/green color test miserably, and for the first time ever was officially diagnosed with red-green color-blindness. We also found out that nothing could be done about it. It was an inherited trait or shortcoming. And then I remembered: my mother, as well as her father and one of my cousins on that side of the family, had similar problems with colors, even though none of them ever fully admitted it.

So now I quietly live with my "problem" and make the best of it. And as far as the colors red and green are concerned, Nancy cheerfully helps me out to see the world in full color. And it is strange, that I sometimes see those troublesome colors close up after she points them out, but never on my own.

It is fall in Maine right now, and I need (and get) a lot of help enjoying the stunning foliage. As far as navigating on the ocean is concerned, you *MAIB* readers of my sea-faring stories might wonder, I have become a very accurate chart reader and know (and remember) where a marker should be in relation to the obstruction (ledge, rock, etc.). I never rely on them being red or green, but rather look for their shapes: red nuns are pointed and have even numbers, while the green cans are square-topped and have odd numbers.

I have a similar code for red/green traffic lights: the top light is red - TOP is STOP!. The bottom light is green - LOW is GO!. I do have some trouble with blinking red or yellow/amber lights, though. When I drive alone in my car, I assume it is red and proceed very cautiously. Wouldn't you? Our Canadian neighbors (in some provinces) are ahead of us in recognizing the problem for red/green color-blind drivers. They add shapes to the normal color scheme: red lights are often square or double lights, while green lights are diamond-shaped.

Another color issue involves electronic chargers for my VHF marine radio and my

camera, for example, which supposedly change from orange-red to yellowish-green when charge is complete. You must be kidding! I greatly prefer my old satellite phone (aka my "shoe-phone"), which clearly speaks to me with the welcome words "Charge complete". Why can't they all do that?!

So you see, all's more or less under control in my life, and I have learned to compensate for my shortcoming. I am now content, happy and greatly relieved piloting my 17' canoe instead of a 10,000 ton freighter. The sweat on my forehead now is a direct result of how hard I paddle and not from tension, confusion and stress about colors. Cold sweat is such a nasty feeling! Whew! Yes, I feel greatly relieved having finally accepted my hereditary shortcoming. But believe me, color-blindness is still a serious life-changing condition, as I see it.

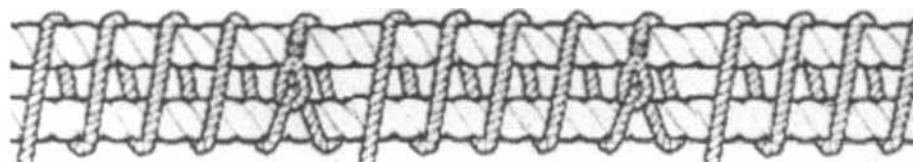
I feel pretty smug, though, knowing that in 76 years nobody has been able to call me on my color problem; I only told Nancy about it. So this might come as a big surprise to a lot of people, including other members of my family and even close friends. Ah, well, it was time to make the world more aware of color-blindness, methinks. It is more prevalent than you might think. And if science ever figures out a way to medically correct this genetic flaw, or technology comes up with special corrective contact lenses or glasses that really work, please let me know.

I just googled color-blindness on the web and found out that apparently there are special glasses available, to offset color-blindness, but not all user opinions are favorable. So I think I'll just stick with what I've got and have another Sam Adams Octoberfest beer to wash down my grief, cheers!

Be safe, have fun and accept any personal shortcomings you cannot change.

(See my article "My Turn at the Helm" on my website about my grandfather and my limited freighter days).

Willoughby on lookout, RZ at the helm, Stillwater River, Orono, ME, 2011.



The forecast of violent wind and rain promised to discourage beach visitors today but open the uncrowded shore for Moo and me to walk before the western blackness makes good on the promise. Behind us is the daily Publix looting and the mildly acrimonious review of individual preferences or sale items occasionally overlooked by the cashier. The troubled Gulf confirms the outlook, but warm surf washes our feet, spilling over yesterday's high water crest, spreading into placid pools over the litter of sun dried shells and fragments of bickering. My stale witticism that we have been married over 100 years, but not to each other, also touches on personalities shaped with earlier partners.

But where to walk? North toward the Clearwater Beach high risers distantly shimmering in the haze, or south into the fresh sou'westerly and late afternoon sun? North wins, even though we'll have to deal with sun and wind returning with shaky ankles and calves. We move up socially and economically as we pass from middle class Indian Rocks Beach to the grander homes and wider lots of Belleair. A white haired and modestly covered stroller in black bathing suit heading south encounters us by a piney lawn to let us know that the trees are Australian pines. She knows these things, she informs us, because Belleair is her turf.

Later we meet again when we have both reversed our courses and I thank her for letting us walk on her beach. "You're welcome," she answers pleasantly. But greed also stalks the beach. Shell collectors fill bags with better specimens that might have graced our bathroom display shelf. Once we met a searcher with a metal detector who said his discoveries included jewelry, sometimes wedding rings. I asked if ancient coins were among his treasures and, showing uneasiness as he swept on, he allowed that he had found one.

Beach

By Bill Sayres

Tantalized by the possibility of uncovering a long buried item of value, I took renewed interest in the possibility that the common hunks of grey clay sea bottom aggregate might encase ancient artifacts. Even though the weight of gold would tend to bury precious metal in the deep, the incrustation over centuries of coral and lighter organisms could give buoyancy to heavier cargo. A curiously shaped piece suggested the shape of a small teaspoon, part of a place setting, perhaps, in an elegant stateroom.

Placing this otherwise undistinguished detritus in my shorts pocket, later at home I let it dry on a workbench until I felt it was ready for careful archeological dismemberment. It resisted delicate surgery and, in my impatience, I resorted to tapping with a hammer, tentatively and then more firmly until the solidification of ages shattered. Clay dust and shell shards spilled over the bench. Exposed surfaces revealed no hiding places, no secrets from long ago, no gift from the sea.

Young sand excavators and castle builders are determinedly touching up their structures as swells pushed by the tide threaten their integrity and flood the craters. Reaching China may have to wait another day. A fisherman with three rods planted at water's edge gets a strike and plays the catch, never losing the cigar clenched in his teeth, light tackle strains against the fish tugging the monofilament line. Castle builders and ball throwers take a break, walkers and swimmers gather. One declares a big fish fighting for freedom as the glinting line shortens but then abruptly goes slack.

The fisherman seems unperturbed, "just an ordinary Jack," and not good eating unlike Pompano. Moo asks how big it is, or was. "Oh, about seven pounds," he guesses. Further on another small group has picked up a whelk shell now the residence of a hermit crab, no more hospitable to these trespassers than the hooked fish and a claw thrust out convinces the curious to return residence and occupant to their watery lot.

Not all, maybe not even most, beach bodies are ambulatory, instead watching walkers like us from canvas chairs, television unavailable. Without a hitch in my purposeful stride, a nano second sidelong glance flits over spread eagled, tan worshippers accepting the martyrdom of solar fire on chaste skin, creeping out from the shelter of minimal modesty. Having turned critical eyes from each other to the beach people, we also comment on inappropriate pint sized bikinis for little girls who should be playing in one-piece suits that cover puberty bottoms. Then a decades old summer memory recalls Jeannie Haduczik, our au pair loved by all, whose pre bikini two piece bathing suit shared the clothesline with young Margie's conventional, demure one piece. Love Jeannie, love her bathing suit, so Margie scissored her own in half and took a quantum leap into adolescence.

The population thins and voices fade in the Gulf's constant growl with sky and horizon obscured in the western gloom as a gull's fleeting shadow crosses my moral path. Returning, we counter the slope of the beach with offsetting body tilt and our legs protest its cruel angle. So we climb above the high water mark, where the shifting, unstable sand drags at our progress. We've come a long way in sand and the car is not much closer.



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Several years ago I was out gunkholing in my Penobscot 14 when I came upon a bottle with a note inside. The paper reminded me of the type brown supermarket bags are made of. It had the appearance of having been through quite an ordeal. The edges were burnt and very crumpled as if it had been in someone's pocket. As I recall there was even some wax on it, as if someone were studying it at night by candle. Although there was no water in the bottle, the paper had clear indications of water damage.

As I looked more closely at the note I could see what looked like a map. It seemed to show a small egg shaped island. On one side it indicated an area of tall rocks and seagulls. On the other side of the island was a beach. Crisscrossing the island were a series of distances and compass headings. It occurred to me that this must be a treasure map! I immediately made arrangements to consult two experts in the field. When I arrived at the prescribed meeting place in Amesbury, my two nephews confirmed what I had suspected, it was indeed a treasure map. They both agreed that it was very old because of the water spots and fire damage. But where in the world was the island and who left the note?

We could read a faint label that said Coney Island. I could tell from the paced off area that this island was much too small to be the one in New York. I had the experts search the only chart I had, one of Salem Beverly Harbor in Massachusetts. And sure enough, they were able to find an island called Coney, the shape even resembled the one on our newly discovered map. The experts were convinced that this was the place. We immediately made plans to investigate Coney Island the next weekend. Before the big day arrived I checked with their mothers to make sure all was ready for the important boat trip and that the experts were still in agreement as to the authenticity of the map. They were.

Saturday was overcast and not the best day for a small boat trip a couple miles off the beach, but there was no lack of enthusiasm to go whatever conditions existed. So off we went for the half hour trip from Amesbury to the beach at Tuck Point on the outskirts of Beverly Harbor. My father and I have often launched there, but this launch was different than any other, this one had such an air of expectancy it was clear that something timeless was about to happen.

The seas were beginning to pick up as the afternoon winds began to strengthen, but the Penobscot 14 was up for the challenge. With four oars in the water we made good time out to the island. The experts were counting their money before we even got off the boat. They were convinced of a large haul, and who was I to dispute such eminent scholars? So we made the boat secure and began to learn the lay of the land.

From the map we understood that we were on the wrong side of the island. The experts corrected that problem post haste. The next objective was to find the starting point for a series of headings leading to a large X on the map. There were several opinions but finally we all agreed that a large isolated rock was the right place to start. We got the compass out and began the first leg of the journey. We were able to adjust our stride to that of the "pirate" by pacing this first leg. The experts found that they had to take slightly longer steps than what was, for them, a normal stride. Apparently the pirate was a tall one.

The Coney Island Treasure

A True Story of Finding Buried Treasure in Beverly (Massachusetts) Harbor

By Bob Brett

The excitement on the deserted island was reaching a crescendo. I was a little disappointed in the discipline of the experts, I was for a slow, systematic approach to locating the X and they wanted to begin digging up the whole beach haphazardly. In the end reason prevailed and we were able to pace off the four or five headings that led us to the treasure. All agreed that this was the place and the digging commenced in earnest. Sand was flying everywhere. I have never seen two boys so excited, and when they finally saw a wooden box at the bottom of the hole, boy, oh boy, they were sure we had struck it rich.

The box had two bones attached to the top. It was unclear what type of bones they were, they looked like cooked chicken bones to me. But no matter, the experts were more interested on what the box contained. They unceremoniously dismantled the lock and opened the box. Inside was a collection of odds and ends, gold coins, beads, Japanese occupation money (I don't know where that came from), old nails, some miscellaneous

items and a set of false teeth. It was the false teeth that would pose problems later on.

The wind and waves were becoming contrary so I made the decision to return to Tuck Point as soon as all the loot could be secured in the Penobscot 14. There were joyous songs of life on easy street and a chorus of "If I were a rich man" as we rowed back to shore. When we arrived at the beach Oliver Brett, an old salt from Beverly, greeted us. He was impressed with the take and told us there had long been an oral tradition of a pirate who had buried treasure on Coney Island. There was no doubt now, the legend was true!

We got the boat back onto the trailer and started home. I dropped the two experts off in Amesbury to divide the loot between them while I continued on to put the Penobscot 14 away. That evening I enjoyed a fine dinner with my wife, sharing the events of the day. Not too long after, about the time little boys go to bed, we received a phone call from one of the parents of the experts. It seems the experts had determined that the teeth were from "the" pirate, and that he would not be happy that his secret treasure had been desecrated. We had an emergency on our hands, the boys could not sleep with such guilt.

So I had to come clean. I explained that I had planted the treasure the week before with the old salt from Beverly. That seemed to satisfy them enough to get some rest.

(Several years later the boys and I went back to the exact spot we had found the treasure. Here are a couple of pictures of that day).



White Fleets

Leviathan II, a Canadian tourist boat whale watching near Tofino, British Columbia, suddenly capsized with 27 people on board. Five were found dead, one is missing and two required air transport to hospitals, at least two were in serious condition and several suffered minor injuries, including one with a broken leg. The exact cause of the accident remains under investigation but a rogue wave may be the culprit. Passengers claimed that a sudden wave hit them broadside immediately prior to the sinking. The turning turtle happened so quickly that no Mayday or alert was possible.

Jamie's Whaling Station, owner of the vessel, has been in business for 25 years without an accident. The owners are in full cooperation with authorities. *Leviathan II* was at less than capacity on a normal afternoon. Publicity pictures of the boat show a twin deck craft with the people standing on the upper deck, watching whales. Capsizing could have been the result of people all standing on one side and taking a large wave from the opposite side.

A 35-year-old man fell or jumped from a Royal Caribbean cruise ship, *Oasis of the Seas*, approximately 35 miles northeast of Mayaguana, Bahamas. At 1am the ship launched two small boats and notified the Coast Guard of the man's missing. The USCG sent an H-130 Hercules airplane and a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Clearwater. In spite of searching 931 square miles, the man was not found.

Within one week Caribbean cruise liners had two additional suicides jumping overboard. The cruise line operators have had a significant problem of people jumping overboard. Possibly the individuals found that *The Love Boat* was just a fantasy. One would think that if a person was depressed enough to murder himself, he could find a less expensive way to go. Thought of the day: I will loan him my shotgun if he will give me his tickets on a cruise.

My Finnish born wife happily displayed data that the Port of Helsinki set a new record for cruise ships landing there. Well above previous numbers, 254 passenger ships landed over 437,000 visitors in the Capital City between May and October with indications that the number will be greater next year. Noora Heino, Cruise Manager for the port stated that, "This shows how Helsinki is still one of the most attractive destinations in the Baltic Sea." Most of the tourists are from Germany, followed by the US and England.

The harbor is the site of the great Cathedral of the city, the Presidential Palace and one of the largest market squares in the city. A visitor can literally step off the ship, jump onto a streetcar and be taken throughout the city or to the train station to journey into Finland or Russia. Most Helsinki attractions are within walking distance (if you have a good pair of shoes). Tallinn, Estonia, is only two hours away by boat. St Petersburg, Russia, is about the same via train.

Gray Fleets

China and the US Navy are diplomatically shouting at each other over a destroyer that sailed within 12 miles of a manmade island off the mainland. The Defense Department, with the full cooperation of the State Department, sent the *USS Lassen* (DDG-82) into the area. China claims territorial rights to the waters and accused the Navy of violating



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

their border. The State Department maintains that China is building islands in international waters in order to broaden their borders and influence. Evidently both sides are correct. China has manipulated ownership of dozens of small islands off Viet Nam and other countries in order to control the region.

By building islands on shallow reefs throughout the South China Sea and claiming them as their territory, China has virtually blockaded Viet Nam. Furthermore, with sundry reefs stretching between China and the Philippines, the Fiery Dragon is pushing its frontier into the Philippines border islands. The US and Southeast Asian countries have loudly complained about this issue. Never missing a chance to kick a political football, Sen John McCain (R-Arizona) and Sen Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) denounced the Defense Department for stirring up problems with China.

Those of us who fall into the senior citizen bracket and retain some semblance of memory may remember the Nixon-Kennedy debates of 1960 when the issue of Quemoy and Matsu islands between mainland China and Taiwan were a hot topic. Nixon was fired up because the Communist Chinese government fired upon the uninhabited islands on a weekly basis and he wanted some sort of military and/or diplomatic mandates to support Taiwan as maintained under treaty. Kennedy claimed the problem was non-existent and, other than frightening birds, the shelling was inconsequential and militarily indefensible. As of November 9, 1960 (the day after the election) Quemoy and Matsu have never been spoken of again. To the best of my knowledge China still shells the islands once a week on Tuesday mornings at 10am. OK, that is indeed sarcasm, but not necessarily wrong.

Who said the Cold War was over? Russia "leaked" information on a new "Doomsday Torpedo," a robotic mini submarine capable of speeds of 100 knots and range of over 6,300 miles acting as a self-destructive nuclear weapon. The US Naval Institute's analyst, Eric Wertheim, stated that this indicates the Russian mindset regarding war. Evidently Putin is reactivating the offense minded military weaponry. In the same "leak" Putin allegedly responded angrily at the US for posts in Poland and Romania as well as the improvements to the Arleigh Burke destroyers. He also reputed to claim that the West is developing a "small area" nuclear bomb for smaller diameter destruction than the typical bombs with which the public is more aware.

Speaking of the Cold War, a pair of Russian Tupelov TU-142 Bear F/J maritime surveillance planes came within a single mile of the *USS Ronald Reagan*, forcing the US carrier to launch four fighters to escort the Russians. The *Reagan* was on maneuvers off the coast of Korea. This particular infraction was characterized as neither unprecedented nor unsafe.

Former USMC General Francis X. Kelly (not too Irish, is he), has been named the first ever Undersecretary of Navy for Unmanned Systems. The development of drones of various sizes, surface vessels, submarines and who knows what all, suggests that the next war might be fought by soldiers, sailors and airmen peering at a computer screen while operating their weapons thousands of miles away. Science fiction writers have long wondered about the impact of such warfare on the people involved. Hand to hand combat or firing a weapon at an enemy is very real to the individual. Playing "games" on computers takes away all such personal mental involvement. Even today we fight drone warfare in the Middle East where the pilots sit in Nevada sipping Cokes and taking breaks at the nearby McDonalds. It seems a bit weird.

Most salty dogs don't pay much attention to highbrow electronics, computers and security systems, however, as military and civilian ships are significantly dependent on these, it is imperative that electronic security is a top priority. A recent Madame Secretary TV show had Air Force 1's electronic systems, including navigation and communications, controlled by an outside force. Such a situation is more probable than we want to believe. Cargo ships tend to have a very small crew because computers handle everything. Military ships are further susceptible to weapons hacking.

Naval Sea Systems Command (NavSea) is working with the American Society of Naval Engineers trying to establish guidelines for ship cyber security. One of their top priorities is to create a series of guidelines for safety of systems. Other priority questions include what do we need, what is a potential problem, what kind of tools are available, how do we prevent intrusion, etc? Science fiction is already here. I worked in the crypto field 45 years ago and was astounded at the US electronic and cryptological capabilities, and I cannot imagine what exists now. Computers are incredible and hackers are blatant geniuses. So if you see an aircraft carrier sailing up the Mississippi or a guided missile cruiser in the Chicago River, it probably isn't doing so under its own direction.

Big River

We trained dogs to sniff explosives and drugs, now we are training dogs to sniff for mussels. The Minnesota DNR has a dog that can smell zebra mussels on trailers, boats, transoms and motors in less than 30 seconds while a human takes at least ten minutes to carry out a similar inspection. Reggie, a Labrador retriever, is working the Minnesota Lakes areas but another lab is on the way to work the Mississippi.

Tim Mason, a Marquette/McGregor, Iowa, naturalist and peerless conservationist, howled aplenty over a bowfishing tournament held across the Mississippi in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, that created a nighttime nightmare for campers, tourists, residents, and groups such as the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and Friends of Effigy Mounds. One hundred and thirty people using very loud airboats and bright LED lights ran around from dusk until dawn on the river shooting fish. The winner managed to bring in 318 fish. Supposedly they were to draw a bead only on invasive carp but rules allowed native fish including buffalo, red horse, drum and gar.

The Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge claimed that the tournament should not have been held in its area, however, sponsor Cabella's, a sporting goods retailer, said all was legal for the World Championship of the Bowfishing Association of America. Sabrina Chandler, the Refuge manager, received a plethora of complaints about noise and lights, but she claimed she was told about the tournament only two days before the event (reported in *Big River Magazine*).

Minnesota politicians and conservationists have become deeply concerned about the potential damage of spilled oil or toxic chemicals from trains. In the Twin Cities, experts note that over 300,000 people live within a mile of tracks heavily travelled by tanker cars and La Crosse, Wisconsin, has 8,000 people along very busy track lines. What is an added concern is that railroad lines parallel so many waterways. The Mississippi has constant train service along both east and west banks running from Minneapolis to St Louis or deviating near La Crosse or East Dubuque, Illinois, to Chicago. One cannot be on the main channel of the Mississippi for very long without seeing a freight train heading north or south on either side of the river, to say nothing of the multitude of rivers and streams that dump into the Big River.

Cottage Grove, Minnesota, looked at an unnamed island in the Mississippi and saw opportunity on the three acre home for frogs, toads, mosquitoes and eagles. The city purchased the island and plans on using part of it for canoe landings and recreational use.

Commercial Fleets

Just when we thought things were going smoothly, all hell breaks loose. Japan announced that it would start whaling again despite the International Whaling Commission, of which Japan is a member and treaty signatory, stating that Nippon's whaling is illegal. The Asian country maintained that the IWC's ruling was improper, that scientific research on whaling is inaccurate and their killing of whales is necessary research unto itself (although they didn't mention that whale meat ends up on the table and not in the lab; furthermore, companies are making a lot of yen in the deal). The International Court of Justice confirmed that Japan was violating international law.

With all this said, it is no wonder that another group has announced their impact on the whaling industry. Paul Watson, the leader of Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and center of Animal Planet's TV show, has petitioned the Costa Rican government to drop charges against him and his staff. Watson is accused of ramming a Costa Rican fishing boat that was fishing for sharks. Interpol placed a "Red Notice" (a virtual warrant for his arrest and extradition). Watson claims he was in Guatemalan waters and had the permission of the government to prevent shark fishing by the Costa Rican fishing fleet.

Sea Shepherd showed off their brand new ship that shall be used to stop Japan's killing of whales. Watson and friends are raising money via Facebook to fund another war in the Antarctic. Woody Henderson (a popular sailor and boat delivery provider) is scheduled to take the new boat from Florida to the west coast of Mexico. Captain Woody is a highly popular writer among readers of the late *Latitudes and Attitudes* and now of *Cruising Outpost*, both of which were published by Bob Bitchin.

Meanwhile, Denmark has sentenced five of the Sea Shepherd crew for violation of some obscure law. The crew claimed that their actions were not within the Danish territory, that their actions were to prevent illegal fishing as per Danish law and European Union law of which Denmark is a member, and that some of the people charged were not even on the boat but were simply on shore wearing Sea Shepherd clothing. Of course, this is what Sea Shepherd claims. The typical fine was around \$4,000 USD but Sea Shepherd Conservation Society was hammered with a significantly higher fine. Denmark's prosecutor also demanded that all the crew be deported immediately. Denmark claims they were illegally demonstrating. The Sea Shepherd crew says they were trying to stop the slaughter of 253 whales.

Needless to say, Animal Planet will have another series of shows. NOAA noted, with great frustration, that the US predicted Japan's renewal of whaling in violation of law, common sense and gentlemen's agreements. Let the fight begin.

CMA CGM *Bougainville*, the largest commercial ship under the French flag, joined the CMA CGM fleet recently. It is an 18,000 TEU and is 400 meters long (that's big). With state of the art technology, CMA CGM claims it is the most green ship working the sea emitting only 37g of CO2/km for each container, three times better than most ships of a decade ago. *Bougainville* can haul over 200,000 tons of goods throughout the world. Her schedule included the Middle East, Asia, Panama and Europe.

Hurricane Joaquin claimed the lives of 33 sailors aboard the *El Faro* en route from Jacksonville, Florida, to Puerto Rico. The ship was old and soon to be retired from service when it was slammed by the hurricane. The captain immediately radioed the Coast Guard that his ship had lost power, was listing and taking on water. It disappeared from contact shortly thereafter.

Investigators used the Navy's CURV-21, a remote undersea vehicle, to find the wreckage. After discovering a sunken hull, NTSB confirmed it was indeed the *El Faro* lying in 15,000' of water east of Bermuda. They also confirmed that the hull was too deep to recover any containers on deck. The officials did note that the data recorder, or Black Box, would be the focus of continued work on the wreck; however, they also said that weather, the depth, currents and leased time with CURV-21 were limiting factors.

Pirates

Pirates managed to take *MV Orkim Harmony* off the coast of Malaysia with the intent of selling the 50,000 gallons of fuel on the black market. Intelligently, the gang attempted to disguise the ship by changing the name and altering its appearance. This worked for over a week before an Australian P-3 Orion figured out the scheme and directed a Malaysian Naval ship to intercept the tanker. The *Orkim Harmony* and its 22 crewmen were sent back to Malaysia but the hijackers were taken into custody in Viet Nam.

When it rains it pours. *MV Orkim Harmony's* sister ship, *MV Orkim Victory*, was pirated a month earlier in the same region. Unfortunately, 6,000 gallons of diesel was siphoned off for resale and the thieves managed to escape. Malaysian authorities have demanded jurisdiction over the pirates that attack Malaysian flagged ships but the inter-

national entities fighting piracy in the region have different ideas.

Oceanic News

Whale vomit headlines internet news when a man discovered several pounds of the waxy substance (ambergris) floating in the ocean. He has opened the auction for the stuff at a mere \$10,000; however, a similar batch of the smelly stuff was recently sold for \$150,000. Upscale perfumers are falling all over themselves for this product that is a significant element in expensive perfumes. A few months ago whale poop was mentioned in this column for its contribution to the ecology of oceans. Now vomit is making the news. At this rate whale snot is probably the cure for cancer.

The overall ecological balance of the oceans is vastly dependent on whales. Their food consumption is so huge that the entire sea's food chain is dependent on them. A whole list of fish, crustaceans and birds are intricately based on the whale population. Even a dead whale falling to the bottom becomes food for fish, plankton, plants and all sorts of beasts that start the food circle. It was only after the 19th century slaughter of whales that scientists understood how the total ecological circle works. Cod, mussels, prawns, squid and a myriad of fish are all directly dependent on whales. Since the variety of whales ranging from baleen whales to sperm whales have different diets, the extinction of one species sets off huge changes in the seas, and that impacts climate. Earth was in perfect ecological balance until the evolution of man. And we think we are the peak of God's creations.

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Rebuilding the Bottomless Boat

Dad had always said we could rebuild my bottomless boat when I learned to swim. Well, at age 11 I returned from Boy Scout Camp with a First Class swimming achievement and a rowing merit badge in hand, determined not to waste any more time.

Three years earlier our family had moved to Indiana from Chicago's North Shore, where the derelict had been found. Utterly unchanged, the hulk hung from the rafters in our garage. Even the two beams we had once nailed across the bottom to support the boat atop a Radio Flyer wagon were still in place.

I had already collected a small library for the study of boatbuilding. Included were current issues of *Popular Mechanix* magazine containing boat plans and *Boats Anyone Can Build*, published hardbound in 1949 by Popular Science. There was also a wonderful old book Dad gave me titled *101 Things a Boy Can Build*. Its musty yellowed pages showed how to ski on barrel staves, how to sail a bicycle, how to make stilts or a crystal radio receiver and how to build an iceboat starting with some old skates; in fact, just about anything a kid might want, including watercraft.

This literature, seasoned with advice from Dad and details remembered from the sailing prams at camp, just about covered all I needed to know. One chapter in *Boats Anyone Can Build* detailed a flat-bottomed 9 1/2' "Plywood Sailing Dinghy," which became my focal point.

One Saturday soon after my return from camp, we hitched the utility trailer behind our old Chevy and went to the lumberyard. Topping our list was a sheet of 1/4" marine plywood. We needed a 2x4 for a mast and in a stack of 16-footers found a nice one having only a few small knots. Other items on our list were clear and #2 white pine in various widths to be used for frames, keel, thwarts and rudder.

The hulk was unlashed from the rafters and set inverted on grocery crates under the shade of our backyard maple.

The old fasteners were extracted from the chine and the surfaces planned down to better wood. I found our two carpenter's planes to be unwieldy beasts and resorted to wood rasps for the most part.

Bottom frames were cut from 1x2 pine and fitted between the original topsides frames. Then we applied a generous trickle of some tarlike gunk all around the chine and across the frames. The man at the boat shop had said it was just the thing for sealing a new bottom. The stuff sure smelled strong. I hoped it would make up for the less-than-true surfaces I had obtained with the rasps. My library showed oakum cord used in seams like this, but Dad had seen lots of roughly planked skiffs and john boats on the Tippy canoe River where he grew up, and apparently none of them had oaken in the seams.

We set the rough-cut plywood in place, weighted with large rocks so it would conform with the rocker, and secured it with brass screws at stem and stern. Fortunately, the goop did not harden quickly because driving the rest of the screws took a few days. Finally, the plywood was trimmed closer with a coping saw and sanded flush.

All the tools we used were elbow powered, and I discovered that building boats required lots more of it than any project attempted up to that time, including the tree house Dad helped us put up the year before. Our saws were two old Disstons, a crosscut and a rip, which had belonged to my grandfather. There was a keyhole saw, too, which came in handy for cutting the daggerboard slot.

There were several wood rasps, including a really hairy one once used for shoeing horses "down home." Down home was where

all of Dad's old tools had originally come from. He's given some of them to my brothers and me over the years since. We've all got table saws, band saws, saber saws, routers and multi-speed reversible electric drills now, but it's good to have those old things around.

Of course we had pliers and screw drivers of various types and sizes. Then there was a ball-peen hammer for finishing rivets as well as both curved and straight-claw carpenter's hammers.

Fine fits could be shaved with any of three mortise chisels struck with our choice of rustic wooden mallets, heavy and not-so-heavy, that Dad liked to make himself.

But the neatest tools were those for drilling, boring and countersinking holes. This boat needed about a hundred times more holes than anything I'd ever made before. Dad had a nice bit brace along with all the screw-tipped double-spur auger bits from 1/4" to 1 1/4" diameter one might want. And if those weren't enough, there was an auger he kept wrapped in oiled paper that had an adjustable spur so we could bore holes up to about 3" diameter. The brace had wooden handles worn smooth as anything, and a reversible ratchet, too, so we could bore holes and drive or extract screws in quarters too tight for a full swing around.

Then there was the Stanley drill, with an intriguing iron frame and wooden handle and crank knob even nicer than those on the brace. There was a threaded wood cap on the handle so we could keep drill bits right there inside. We never did, though, because Dad liked to have a wood block in which a hole had been drilled for each bit. The Stanley's gears made such a pleasant sound when spinning that it was easy to drill too deep.

After my friend Joey and I had broken off several brass screws fastening the bottom, Dad said we probably weren't drilling the

pilot holes correctly; that if we took time to drill a hole matching the unthreaded shank through plywood and a little into the chine, then a smaller deeper hole for the threads, finishing with a countersink for the head, the screws wouldn't break. I had a cheaper drill of my own whose gears clattered instead of purred, so we set ourselves up to drill the big hole with the Stanley, the little hole with mine, and the counter with the brace, completely eliminating time required for changing bits.

The Nipper's mast (by now she had acquired a name) was carved from 2x4 framing lumber. Knowing that wouldn't match the spruce spars on the prams at camp, we increased the cross-section somewhat. With the full stock dimension extending upward to a little above the gooseneck, we laid out a faintly convex line which tapered to 11/2" square at the head. We had studied the wood carefully so the line passed all the knots by a fair margin. Then we began sawing with the well-worn six-point ripper. With promises of fine sailing, my next younger brother and two of my friends were recruited for help. Before we finished, Dad bought a new and considerably sharper saw which was appreciated by all hands. Still, the cut took almost a week.

Rip sawing most of a 13' board was hard work. Sometimes Dad would do a foot or so in the evening after supper. Left to ourselves we could be distracted by almost anything that sounded like more fun, such as a softball game or a ride over to the gravel pit to climb around on the abandoned machinery.

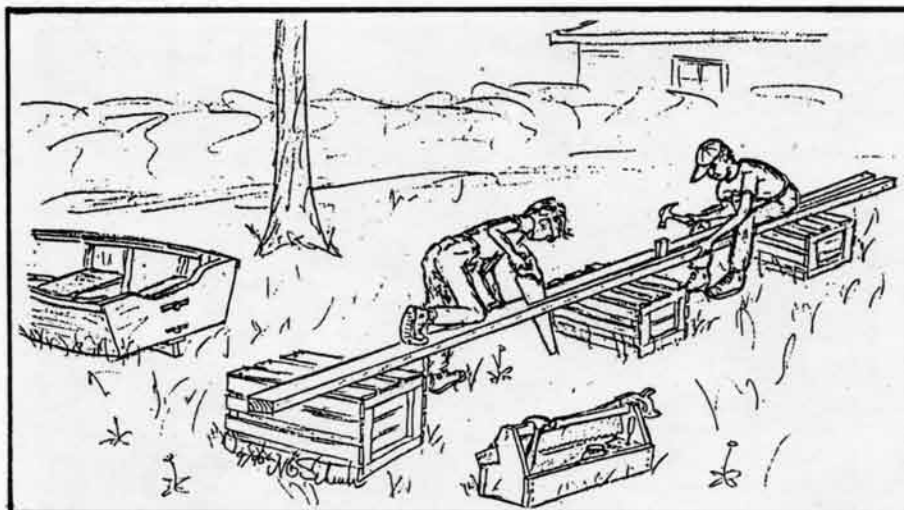
For rounding the spar, Dad presented me with a brand new drawknife. He had often said it would be just the thing for shaping the mast. He seemed to have a special regard for drawknives, and their cousin the spokeshave; influenced I supposed by memories of his father taking rough planks from his steam sawmill and paring them down to make something useful. In fact, our collection of family treasures includes a rude sauerkraut masher carved from a hardwood board with a drawknife.

Boy! Could that thing whack off wood! I practiced on scrap lumber to develop some control over the powerful blade. For a long time that drawknife was the classiest tool in my possession. I still have it, and though it's used from time to time to whap bark off green stuff, it looks as good as new.

Our boatbuilding skills may have been rather rough, but my brothers and I learned to respect tools. Anything left out all night where the dew might get on it was sure to bring a stern lecture from Dad at supper because he was sure to have spotted it when he'd left for the office early that morning. Each evening we covered the boat with a tattered old canvas tarp, weighted with rocks to withstand wind, and it was OK to leave ordinary tools such as screwdrivers underneath.

After two coats of spar varnish had dried we went back to the boat shop for some bronze sail track and slides. At about \$12, it was the most expensive item of gear on the boat. The little brass screws for fastening the track were easy to drive just by poking a starter hole with an awl, so that didn't take long.

A daggerboard trunk was made from leftover plywood and odds and ends of one-by-pine. It was simple enough to build, however, the installation was a moment of truth. Taking a deep breath, we bored a row



of 1" diameter holes through the new keel and bottom, then cut a straight slot with the pointy keyhole saw. The trunk was sealed with more of our sticky goop and drawn down tight with ordinary zinc-plated steel carriage bolts. It was my first exposure to these clever bolts, which Dad said were used to fasten wagon boxes so you wouldn't snag a shovel unloading grain. Here they would keep the Nipper from snagging gravel on the shore.

The daggerboard was a solid oak extender leaf from a massive old table, also from down home, that Mom used with her Cub Scout den. She had four such leaves, but never needed more than two. Since the oak was plenty long, I decided that our board should extend a foot deeper than those in the prams at camp. The forward edge was rounded and the after edge tapered with the drawknife, but it didn't just walk right through like it did on pine.

The rudder profile on the plans for the 91/2' dinghy had pleasing curves, even though it had been designed to fit the dimensions of a single wide plank. Our widest board wouldn't stretch, so we added a strip of one-by with long slender screws and more of the goopy gunk. The shape was painstakingly enlarged to full size and laid out on the wood. Cutting was done with the coping saw, then I rounded and tapered the blade with my drawknife.

What to use for a tiller? Dad had kept a cracked hickory handle from a garden hoe and said that the good portion would be plenty strong. The years would prove him right. Nothing on the Nipper ever broke.

We bought a pair of galvanized pintles at the boat shop, one a bit longer than the other, but only one gudgeon because we already had one on the boat. Amazingly, after years of abuse there was still one article of bronze hardware that hadn't been lost.

A crisis arose when I discovered the hole in the original gudgeon was much too large for the new pintles, but Dad had another trick up his sleeve. He said we could fill the hole with solder and drill a smaller one, the same way machinists make babbit bearings. I was skeptical, and would much preferred to have bought a proper pair of gudgeons.

Well, we melted part of a bar of solder in an iron ladle, heated the gudgeon, wiped the hole with flux, set it on a bed of sand on a brick, and poured in the solder. His idea proved worthwhile because the solder never wore out.

This was typical of our approach. The boat books would tell about proper methods

and hardware, and we would discuss these things at supper. Then Dad would show me how to make something that would serve as well, at little or no cost.

"Down home" had been rural Indiana where making do with what was on hand had been a way of life. Conspicuously apart from my boat books, *101 Things* seemed to reflect much of Dad's resourcefulness. Or maybe it's the other way around. The Boy Scouts put a lot of stock in self-reliance, too, but they had to get up pretty early in the morning to teach more of that than I could get at home.

For new bow, middle, and stern thwarts we used 1x10 No. 2 white pine. The knots never fell out. In fact, finished with spar varnish, the knots and swirling grain looked nice.

The remains of many coats of paint in various colors were laboriously sanded off a pair of knees joining gunwales to transom, revealing stout oak. A hole was drilled in each for the mainsheet traveler, then varnished.

A small foredeck was made of leftover fir plywood and this too was finished bright.

Dad maintained that we shouldn't walk around right on the bottom and frames, insisting that I add floor boards. We discussed this a lot because all of the rowing skiffs did not seem to need floors; in fact, we braced our heels on the frames. In the end I had to admit he had a point because the Lightning at camp had cedar floor boards and the prams had squares of plywood fastened over the frames. Our floor boards were half-by-four clear pine door casing. From the same section of the lumberyard, the new outwales and inwales were clear pine door stop.

Everything that hadn't been varnished was painted white with two coats of Interlux boat enamel. Brushed on thick in an attempt to seal up the badly checked topsides, it took forever to dry; but once hard, it never peeled off.

By golly, the Nipper now looked like a pretty fine sailboat! Even Judy, the girl next door, said so.

Well, our intention had been to enjoy a good part of summer vacation out sailing. As it turned out, Labor Day passed and school resumed with the Nipper still lying under the tarp. How we finished the rig, lofted a sail, and finally, how it all performed, will be another story.

Moby Nick

Traditional Boat of the Month “The Chesapeake Bay Skipjack”

Fair Winds, Mr Cleat



The Skipjack is the last remaining craft in Chesapeake Bay actively harvesting sea-food under sail. As such she is beloved by Chesapeake Bay people as a symbol of their connection to the history of the Bay. To find Skipjacks you must go to the Eastern Shore, as folks down there call it, to see and, if you are lucky, catch a ride on one of the remaining few. Your Editor and Publisher were fortunate to wander by the docks at Tilghman Island, Maryland, just as Captain Wade Murphy was leading visitors aboard the *Rebecca T Roark*. Needless to say we hopped aboard and had a delightful sail as Captain Wade, an accomplished raconteur, gave a history of the craft as well as an opinion on the current state of the oyster fishery, its management or the lack thereof.

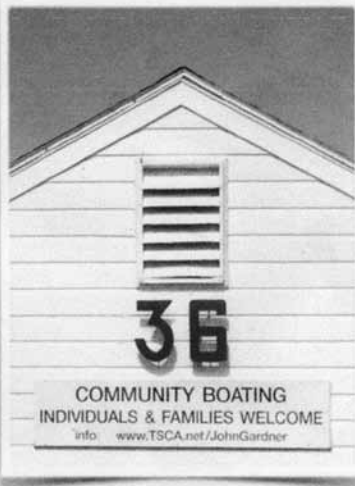


Sail only dredging for oysters dates back to 1865 when the Maryland legislature passed one of the country's earliest conservation statutes, prompting development of the Skipjack. The concern was over harvesting by steam dredges, still a concern today as the annual harvest is down to only 1% of a century ago. Sail only dredging remained in effect until 1967 when it was modified to allow power dredging from Skipjacks two days a week, hence the addition of power push boats. Then in 1999 the law was completely overturned allowing power dredging from regular work boats. As Captain Wade explained, the controversy goes on. At stake is the concept of a wild fishery, the alternative is private leases for aquaculture.

Christopher White, author of *Skipjack: The Story of America's Last Sailing Oystermen*, suggests in a letter to the editor of the *Baltimore Sun* that perhaps the answer lies

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with some combination of sanctuaries, wild beds in public domain and some areas for oyster farming. Meanwhile, Captain Wade was planning to up rig and go dredging oysters starting October 1 under sail and/or power.

So what kind of vessel evolved from all this? What was needed was a burdensome vessel that had sufficient sail power to pull a dredge over shallow oyster beds and carry a full load of oysters a distance to market. New Haven sharpies were faster but designed to hand tong oysters. Also, their markets were much closer to their grounds. Flat bottomed skiffs evolved to include some dead rise (“Vee”) in their aft quarters and were called Hampton Flatties but tended to pound in the Bay chop. Hence the Skipjack’s Vee bottom from fore to aft. Another type was tried, the bateaux, which had a Vee (or “file”) bottom but was narrow and double ended so not sufficiently burdensome. The bateaux name, however, stuck, Skipjacks are often referred to as “two sail bateaux.”

If you were a fisherman in the 1880s and had no set of plans, what would you tell your builder you wanted? Chappelle quotes M.V. Brewington, Jr:

“The greatest beam is one-third of the length on deck, and is located between one-half and two-thirds of the length on deck abaft the stem. The width of the transom is about three-quarters of the greatest beam. The flare of the sides varies from 2” to 3” for each foot of depth amidships. The mast’s step is located one-fifth or one-sixth of the length on the waterline abaft the stem and the mast rakes at about 75°, the masthead coming over the point of maximum beam. The length of the mast is equal to the length on deck plus the beam. The length of the bowsprit, outboard, is equal to the greatest beam. The length of the boom is equal to the length of

the hull on deck. The centerboard is one-third the length on deck and placed in the middle third of the aforementioned length.”

There you have it, builders and modelers. Commence building. If you must have a set of plans go to Figure 117 of Chappelle’s *American Small Sailing Craft* for a particularly fast version designed for an oyster pirate who dredged only after dark and needed speed. He also changed the boat’s name when it became too well known.

Why so much rake to the mast? Probably two reasons; one, it allows the mast to be stepped further forward thereby increasing deck space, and secondly, keeps the center of effort of the sail plan pretty much in the same place fore and aft as the sail is reefed which, with Skipjacks, is often. Other refinements include a centerboard mounted in a slot so it hangs down below the hull a bit to assist sailing in shoal waters. With a bit of fishing about, this slot also allows removing the centerboard from inside boat.

While the V-bottom started in Revolutionary times when Benedict Arnold specified some deadrise in the ends of his double ended gunboats on Lake Champlain and Clapham added some V to the ends of his nonpareil sharpies, the most successful and long lasting V bottomed vessel has been the Chesapeake Bay Skipjack. They are chunky and heavy with their substantial yellow pine scantlings so do not make good yachts but are great fun for an afternoon sail to “drudge” up some oysters. Give Captain Wade a call and go for a ride whenever you are down Tilghman Island way.



October Outing

Very respectfully submitted
by Mr Buntline

In a recap of our visit year before last, but this time at high tide, our John Gardner TSCA group launched at the Grand Island ramp in Old Lyme into the confluence of the Connecticut, Black Hall and Lieutenant Rivers. It was a brisk fall morning after an overnight freeze. Maple trees were ablaze with color. The invasive phragmites had been cut from the marsh so we could clearly see both Saybrook lighthouses to the west of us. Seabirds, gulls and perhaps one faraway eagle soared above as lesser yellowlegs ran along the edge of the marsh.

We rowed the long leg upstream against wind and current to Watch Rock Preserve before turning to coast back down, pass the launch ramp and continue to a sandy point to get out and stretch our legs. The nesting terns had long departed so Ellie’s two pups had a fine time sniffing about. We, in turn, found some beach treasures including joined oyster shells and a lump of coal dropped from a passing barge. Back into the boats, we rowed and paddled the short leg back upstream to take out at the launch ramp. It was time for lunch!

Participants included Bill and Karen Rutherford, Ellie Czarnowski and her two sea dogs, George Spragg and his friend Rita as well as Bill Meier and his wife Kris. Our small craft included the Rutherford's Doug Hylan peapod, Ellie Czarnowski's CLC Skerry *Ophelia*, Bill Meier's John Gardner peapod and Kris Meier's beautiful strip planked kayak. George Spragg's forward facing rowing boat trailer unfortunately threw a wheel on the way down so he and Rita rode with Ellie and Bill. Ellie made George row part of the way.

We lunched at the Morning Glory Restaurant in Old Lyme at a table outside on the banks of the Lieutenant River. We all agreed next year perhaps we should do this in September when it is warmer, but all enjoyed this October's fine fall colors. Then it was time to trailer home and put the boats away for the season. It was a fine season ending row.

Around the Boat Shops

Good news! Our old molds from the *Nina* build are being put to good use. Carl Kaufman has trimmed them down a bit and is ready to set them up to build Atkin's "Maude and Emeline," "A Smart, Able and Low Powered Fishing Skiff" as the Atkins describe it. About 14' long, a bit slimmer than *Nina*, flat bottomed for stability and shaped for a moderate outboard, she should make a fine, stable tender for Carl's large sailboat when in Block Island harbor. Carl plans on plywood lapstreaks and bottom. He had to promise Pat Atkin "not to stretch her" before she would send Carl the plans. This build should provide Carl a nice break from racing shells and guitars. He has already lofted the lines to pick up the stem and transom.

The Mystic Seaport Boathouse Livery and John Gardner Boat Shop have been busy this summer with rentals and repairs. The Beetle Cats had a full racing season on Tuesday nights. The volunteer PILOTS worked a busy weekend, rowing the Livery boats to the Shipyard where the big forklift pulled them and flipped them so more PILOTS volunteers could scrub bottoms, flip them again and then haul them across campus and temporarily store them until the regular winter volunteers can carefully fix, putty and paint them in readiness for next season. Two Beetle Cats are in the John Gardner Boat Shop, *Lisa* is getting a new canvas deck (a team of six pulled the canvas tight while others stapled) and *Lil' Babe's* topsides are turning from red to her original white as she gets refurbished.

Bill Meier is progressing well with rebuilding his 1920s launch. He has replaced



PILOTS cleaning boathouse boats.



Sid Whalen reinstalling *Lisa's* letters. Bill and his launch.

the keel and garboards. The transom is next and possibly another plank or two. At 14' it is just right for Bill and Kris' evening tours of the Mystic River. Original power was gasoline, to repower he is considering electric. A beautiful, classic shape.

Meanwhile, back at the Avery Point Boathouse, Phil Behney and John Symons have completed the rehab of a club dory. The paint was barely dry when this photo was



Bill and his launch.

taken. Note the completely adjustable center seat. Plenty of options for one, two or three, whether they are rowing or not.



John Symons and Bill Armitage with dory.



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Outboard Build

Brian Mitsch, a member of our JGTSCA Chapter, shows up every once in a while to give Andy and George a hard time. He brings us a boat build from the small engine side of the house. He describes his boat as similar to a "Cocktail Racer" but with more modern lines. He explains that the original stock outboard boats were really just Cocktail Racers.

Brian is a member of the Antique Outboard Motor Club, an international organization focused on collecting old outboard motors and preserving their history. See www.AOMC.org. Many of their local club members show up at Mystic Seaport for the small engines display. We appreciate Brian sharing this article in response to our request for club member articles on what's abuilding. Keep them coming!

Frankie's Kid II (10-3-15)

During the winter of 2014 plans were developed for a new APBA (American Power Boat Association) stock outboard race boat to meet the "D" Class specifications. For many years I have raced in a smaller racing class using a 25ci Mercury racing outboard motor. My goal was to design and build a new boat that would be paired up with an old school Mercury "D" Class outboard motor that was being built from the ground up. The thought was that since I would be retiring from boat racing in a few years, the boat and motor combination would fit in well with the antique outboard motor clubs that I belong to. The boat design was laid out on the 2D CAD taking into account the best features of previous boat designs and incorporating some new features as well. The boat was designed in a manner to meet the minimum dimensions required for the class.

Specifications

Length: 11'7" bottom of transom to bow stem
Overall Width: 48"

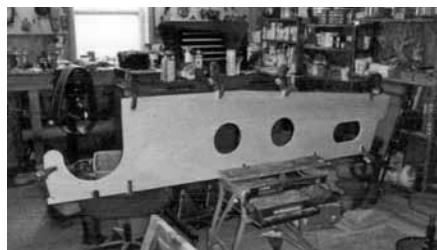
Running Surface Max Width: 26"

Weight: Approximately 170 lbs fully rigged without motor and driver.

The materials of construction were popular for the stringers and battens, a white oak chine rail and okoume mahogany plywood for the skin. A 6oz fiberglass reinforcement was applied with marine epoxy, two layers on direct bottom and one layer on the sides. All joints were glued with epoxy glue and either stainless steel screws or retaining staples were used to secure while the epoxy set.

The boat turned out to be a good match for the older Mercury Outboard motor. During the first race it was found that the boat could be very competitive with boats powered by some of the newer Mercury and Tohatsu motors. Some ignition gremlins were prevalent during the second half of the year that prevented top race finishes. But like all racing, there is always next year!

Main stringer construction.



Bulkhead frame construction.



Framed on jig awaiting outer skin.

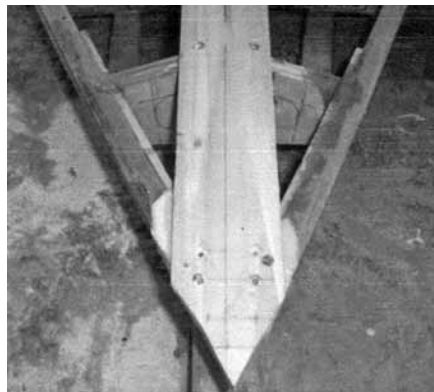


Adding 6mm bottom to frame.



Two layers of 2mm were required to create the round chines.

"Engineering" the bow stem.



Skin'd boat pulled from jig.



Bottom prepared for fiberglass/epoxy coating.



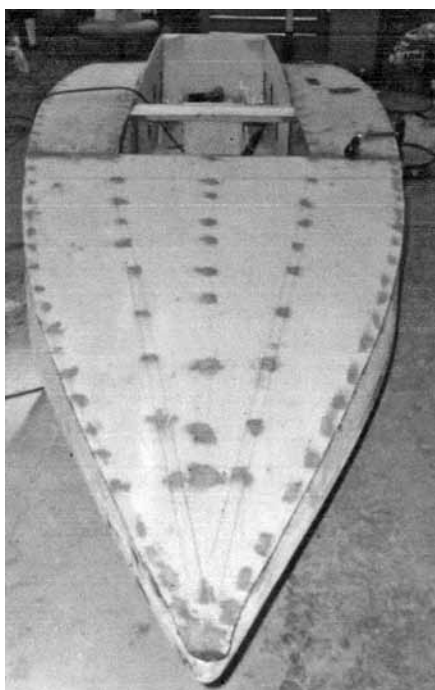
Fiberglass/epoxy covered bottom.

Finished bottom after sanding and painting.



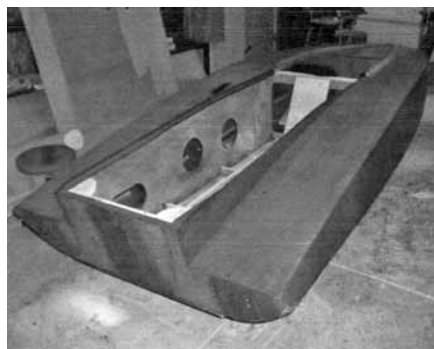


Hull prior to decking.

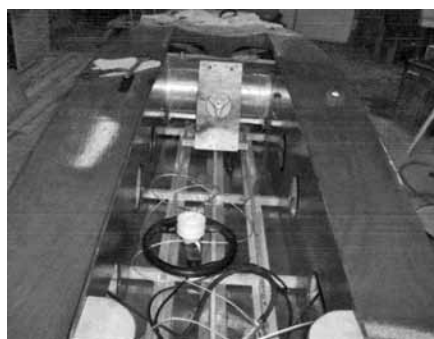


Fully decked.

Completed boat running at 70mph during Top O Michigan Race.



Completing finish work.

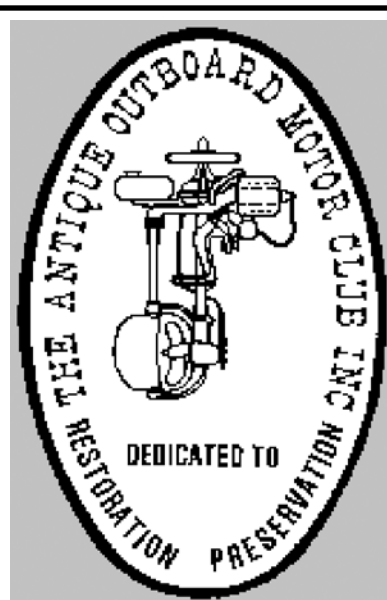


Installing fuel tank and hardware.



Fully restored 44ci 50+hp Mercury Race Outboard, restored to 1960 styling.

Turning a corner in the river at Top O Michigan.



About The Club aomci.org

In 1866, the first outboard device was patented. Since that time, over 160 manufacturers have entered the industry, few remain. Names like Caille, Waterman, Walnut, Lockwood, Motorgo, Columbian, Gray and Ferro are all forgotten except at AOMCI. A worldwide, non profit organization devoted to people who are interested in antique outboards, their preservation and their restoration.

Outboard motors have been manufactured for over 100 years. Therefore, it is no surprise that a number of people should become interested in collecting antique outboards. The interest became so widespread that by 1960, antique outboard collectors began to correspond with one another. In October 1965 five collectors planned and organized "The Antique Outboard Motor Club." In January 1966 the first issue of "The Antique Outboarder" was printed. Thirty copies were mailed to members. By October 1966, membership had increased to more than 200 people in several countries. Our growth continues with membership now in the area of 3,000 dedicated members from (currently) 14 countries.

Chapter 4.0

On to making the lid. I think it has something to do with how I buy new shoes. Actually, if it was completely up to me I wouldn't buy new shoes very often at all. But Kate insists. I guess you could say that I just don't often feel the need for new steeds. She says I keep 'em until they get all curled up. I say, "You mean, all comfortable?" No, that's apparently NOT what she means. Anyhow.

I have reached that point in this Frankenbuild where curled up toes are a potentially big problem. As I have alluded before, I was a liberal arts major. Actual by the book instruction in mathematics and similar dark arts was pretty much a waste of time for me. And believe me, I have attempted to solve this upcoming problem six ways from Tuesday. Really have. I've even asked, nay probed, my engineer friends Mike and Sam several times about this looming crisis in spatial relations. They each looked at me as I was speaking gibberish. And to tell the truth, I thought I was.

Here's the deal, as best as I can see it imaginatively, not actually see it. Not yet. This cabin top that I have started to create will have a constant camber throughout its 10' extent from toe to heel (to keep the shoe paradigm alive). Constant, if my shade tree mechanic solution works out. If I could have figured out how to vary the camber, all would now be forgiven. The princess would live happily ever after. Things would be great. But I couldn't. So.

You see, the deck that runs under that constant camber lid rises over 1' per 8' of travel fore and aft. That's why I beat the horses so mercilessly to build foundations for the windows, and ultimately for the top that allowed for a leveling of the base. But this is a pointy bow boat. Everything curves inward as it goes forward. In fact, at the heel of this creation in foam, athwartship spans exceed 6' and it tapers to under 4' at the toe. This is on a curve that doesn't exactly match anything but it mimics the deck edge and once cockpit coaming lines. Sort of.



To make this lid look like it belongs on this boat, I'll need to cut the outer edge to somewhat parallel the foundation profile (looking down at it). Someplace in one of Sam's old college textbooks there is probably a formula developed by Archimedes or Pythagoras or some other old dead Greek that gives some sort of magic twanger number that you "plug in" to the formula, as those non liberal arts types would say. This Golden Mean sort of thing would tell me how much to increase the camber as I move forward to keep the outer edge all in the same plane. And hopefully, that plane would then be parallel with the foundations that I so laboriously created over the past several day and night

The Birthing of Miss Kathleen

By Dan Rogers

shifts. But I really doubt it.

I think that curved line that I'll need to follow with my saber saw will CLIMB as it gets closer to the center. Hey, it's not just liberal arts majors who understand this. Boy Scouts, too. If you start walking around a mountain with the notion that you'll arrive at the top sometime, then as you get farther away from the lower margin, you'll GET HIGHER. See? Just like my old shoes, curling up toward the toe. But since this ain't exactly rocket science, I'll just have to wait and see what it looks like. But this is sort of what we've got right now.



I was only messing around with possible arcs. But when I sort of set this up and held it down with a couple boards that were going to be part of a pretty elaborate frame and strong-back system, it just sort of said, "How's this?" Not too far from what I was hoping to arrive at with lots of female mold parts and stiffeners and all that engineerspeak.

So I slathered on a whole big tube of PL premium, troweled it around and stuck the two layers together like a really big, rectangular Oreo cookie. The two panels are staggered to allow for a mating with the succeeding sections. The basic blank will be a touch over 6' wide and joined into two 4' pieces and one 2' piece to add up to something like 10'.

If it all doesn't come flying apart and actually holds onto this shape, I'll be able to figure out/guess/stumble upon the next step. This is getting kinda interesting.

Meanwhile, I think Kate is out looking at that pile of sneakers that I use in the shop. Maybe I can get the toes to curl down. Probably not.

Chapter 4.1

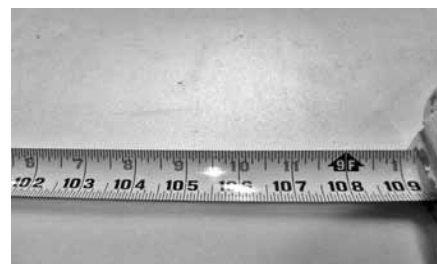
I'd say that we are either at a significant waypoint in this Frankenbuild journey or at the crest of a particularly pernicious slippery slope. I took a pretty big chance and doubled down on a sketchy bet. But, like long odds everywhere, it could turn out alright. I kinda think it will.

It's called "springback" when you torture some sort of sheet goods into a bend that the fibers and grain and thickness and so forth are all set up to defy, even after doing something to give that panel a "set." I don't think it's ever really possible for it to not return to the original flat form to some degree. It sure doesn't seem possible for my "lid" to simply be fabricated with a pleasing level of camber dialed in and just stay put. First, I set up a 4' segment on the bench and attempted to build it piece by piece. But I got worried that the pieces would resist coming together after the individual curves were "set in glue." Logic

demanding that I put the whole thing together of a single piece. Just like Pinocchio's nose, it grew and grew and grew.



Until this contraption was taking up a whole parking space out in the garage.



About then, it sort of slapped me upside the head. Since this thing was probably going to spring back a fair amount anyway, why not just overbend it in the first place? Yeah. So I started piling up the "precision mandrel" under the spine and piling up heavy stuff around the edges to hold things in place while the globs of PL Premium that I spread around between the styro sheets started to hold hands in a more determined manner.



Until I had an 8' chunk of 1/4" wall square steel tubing, a set of snow tires, heavy jack stands and a few odd trailer parts piled up around the edges to pull this huge mouse trap into place. After letting it sit unmolested for an entire day shift, I rolled the weights off and presto, there was this really big sheet of curved Styrofoam. And, just like I figured, the whole thing started to lose its camber almost immediately. Ah, what to do, what to do?

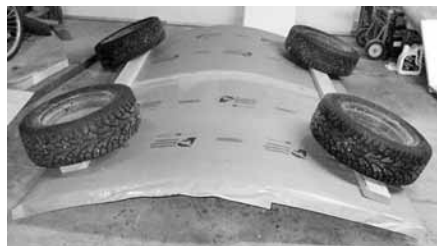
By then it was already at the end of the night shift. I really, really should have just called it quits right then and there. What I had was really big and really fragile. Awkward, to say the least. And I still had to find a way to carry it without breaking it apart. I had to get it hoisted up onto the deck and marked for edge trimming. For things to work out, I knew that "accuracy" depended upon the

huge thing staying in something resembling the final form camber. I had also tried to “eyeball it in” to give the forward sections a greater hump than the aft ones in a determined but wildly imprecise attempt to deal with all those geometric realities that would certainly still need dealing with. Like I was saying, the better part of valor would have been to declare victory and quit the field.

Instead somebody from the Bright Idea Department pointed out that I was simply going to need more thickness built up over the whole surface of the top to keep things in place. I’ve been saving this really heavy 5’ wide roll of specially treated kraft paper that my neighbor gave me for several years. That guy from the BID reminded me about a guy who is a friend of The Lucas, of who Dave says, “Heaven forbid, but this guy thinks like you do...” had discovered the hot setup for gluing sheets of paper to sheets of Styrofoam. This was one of those “hold my beer and watch this!” moments.

This contraption is too wide to reach across and too fragile (presumably) to walk on. I need to keep the weights around the edges to hold the shape. But to build up thickness, those tires and all that heavy jangle of stuff had to be someplace else once the spray glue is sprayed. The paper roll is unrolled. The 10’ length is cut off and pulled across the floor to the scene of the crime. Stuff starts to change shape and move around more than I’d like. Mostly wrinkles began forming in the paper. Time to quit?

Yep, it really was time to quit but none of those voices of reason, caution and care from my morning staff meeting were still around the shop. So, in the immortal words of Admiral Farragut, “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!” I kept piling on layers of paper and glue to my unholy alliance of Styrofoam and PL. And snow tires. Can’t forget the snow tires. As wrinkles formed, I just squeezed them out with a long handled snow scraper and a push broom. Precision tools if there ever was such a thing.



Now, if some genius at the staff meeting this morning can just tell me how to get this thing flipped over and glued up from the underside before the top resembles a prune in a tanning booth because of our old friend Mr Springback, I can just maybe get the damn thing cut to shape and move on to figuring out how to get it levitated into place and supported and held down and a few incidentals like that.

This figure it out as you go method of Frankenbuilding can have its difficult moments.

Chapter 4.1b

Well, things pretty much blew up in my face. Nothing really worked out like planned. At least I didn’t plan anything that worked out. A sensible guy would scrap the whole thing and start over. A pessimistic guy would probably flee in horror. And a smart guy,

well... Fortunately, for this project we don’t have any of those guys on the crew. We do have a large supply of bullheaded blind confidence. In fact, I have plenty of that stuff. Enough to share.

So the paper ended up in a giant version of a Safeway shopping bag. It does seem to stick to itself, just not to the foam. I pondered using two skins and a single core. While that did have promise, I was probably sitting on a barrel of that BHBC stuff at the time, so I just decided to stick with the current horse to try to continue swimming for the far bank of the stream. Not that expert opinion from folks with actual experience hasn’t been offered. I guess it’s the nature of the beast. Nothing of a “conventional” method seemed to fill the bill. Press on regardless.

Way back in the Boy Scouts when I was first learning how to be a lifeguard, we were indoctrinated into the idea that when people think they are drowning, they can do just that in waist deep water. And in this mode, I was probably only in ankle deep water. Another step and all would turn out OK. Well, I suspect I did manage to do what my old lifeguard instructor told us about. It sure felt like deep, deep kim chee. So I decided to keep doing the same thing again, only different.



Instead of using paper and spray glue, I went to $\frac{1}{8}$ ” door skins and good ol’ PL Premium over the same old double layer of tortured foam sheets.



The edges do present a problem. Not a new problem, just one yet to solve. Once more or less glued in place and more or less smooth and fair and more or less shaped around the pretty darn thick perimeter. It was time to test fit this baby elephant before it could eat any more bananas. The future top layer(s) of ‘pox and glass will certainly not make it any lighter.



The psychometric construct “visual learning” is almost certainly an oxymoron. But, as a practitioner of that particularly difficult art, I find it absolutely necessary to see what I’ve got so far to visualize where I’m gonna go from here. So I dragged this rather enormous lid up onto the deck and sprouted some temp supports to sort of see how things are maybe going. At first blush I was encouraged.

Next up was to start doing sort of “final assemblies” to create a sort of reliable form to put the lid back up onto when taped and glassed and shaped and faired down on the floor where I can better reach things. A couple of brainstormers resulted in this overall concept.



Current “plan” is to add a 3’ solid section aft and a pair of leftover turned stanchions near the nose. The solid section should blend with the cladding yet to go on the foundations, and sport a porthole. The stanchions will sit inboard a bit to allow for a row of arched windows along both sides the rest of the way forward.

Tally hooooooooo...



Chapter 4.2

This thing is gonna work. My road warrior buddy Dennis, the Bard of Burnaby, has already asked me if maybe, just maybe, I was suffering the after effects of too long with too short an attention span. That was earlier today. I think I told him “nonsense.” Then I sort of forgot what we were talking about and ran off onto a new adventure. In the spirit of the times, presidential election debate season, I did attempt to do a bit of damage control vis á vis my “position.” I suggested that attention span was overrated. Heck, the deer tick can hang around for two years, looking for the next of his lifetime total three meals, just so he can get a girlfriend. Then she kicks him off the leaf. I say a guy should probably explore other options now and then.

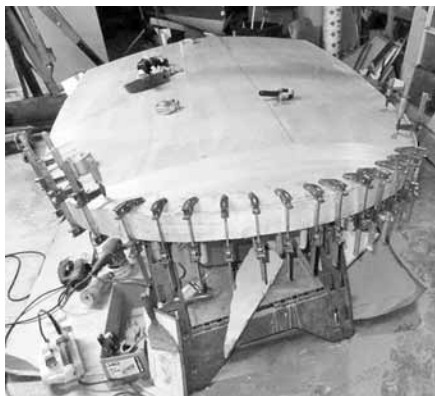
When this monstrosity is finally in place, and hopefully not leaking, I will have totally forgotten how much a PIA it really has been. To listen to The Lucas, building a foam and glass top for a boat is just about as

easy as falling off a piece of cake. Or eating a log? Something.

Anyhow, I'm here to tell you there's more to it than that. Of course, he has his Privy Council that sit around the Tikithrone, sage advice bubbling over like an upturned beer truck. I'm sure those guys really do know what they are doing. I'm much more limited in actual hands on advice. Sam did come over and he did loan me his hot wire setup. His verbal instructions all started with, "All you have to do is..." Then he ran off to hide out in Arizona. Part of the witness protection program or something. So when Plan A, B and part of C didn't pan out, I decided to simply wing it. Sound familiar?



This is sort of how I hope the thing will look someday. But that shop ceiling is way closer to the lid than I care to shove my head into and work at beyond fingertips' reach from a ladder. So, once sort of vetted for shape, and flatness, and curve, and stuff like that, down we came again. I figure that it'll take quite a bit of glass to equal good old trees for stiffness and impact resistance so, back to something that grew in the forest. Chopped up and rearranged, of course.



This is a lot like putting a crust on a marshmallow sandwich. And yes, I do still have to 'pox and glass and tape the thing into submission, but if I do end up accidentally turning the boat over at sea, it'll make for one helluva big longboard to surf to shore on. Did Duke Kahannamoku have these problems?

Chapter 4.3

Getting close(r). This search for the perfect camber, curves and taper in the lid for *Miss Kathleen's* cabin has certainly led to unexpected extra time, effort and expense. But then, the Real Guys with their real store bought plans and prototyped building methods run into unexpected TE&E, too. At least the Frankenwerks has no claim to celebrity for cost overruns.

I'd like to think that if I can get the whole crew to show up for work on time, it's already zero six on Sunday morning and it's been only me and The Boss out there so far, I might get that humongous thing flipped back over to right side up. Today's Big Deal will be to get the top glassed and ready to prime coat it so I can finally get the garage floor cleaned up and cleared up. All that sanding and grinding and stuff out next to Kate's car has given it sort of a fuzzy look. Something that probably should be left for teddy bears and plush pillows.

The elusive curve is beginning to look about like this:



From the backside. And like this:

From the nose. The underside of what will become the visor is all glassed and gooey. That little space heater is supposed to bring the 'pox molecules to a boil sooner. Actually, when Chuck the Duck was attempting to help me understand the whys and wherefores of all this chemistrycrap that you have to understand to make boats with the 'Pox, he said it all, "It should cure overnight. No problem..." The problem probably is one of perception. The night shift around here usually shuts down around zero one or two. The morning guys are already at it by six. Probably not enough time to get all those little fingers warm enough to be holding hands. Maybe the heater will get things hoppin' a bit sooner.

Largely due to the poor attendance record of my crew, the actual turning over

of this top has happened fewer times than I'd really prefer. Stuff like edge trimming and glassing and just visualizing how things are shaping up is limited to one side at a time. These wrists and fingers and knees are simply not willing to hold that heavy belt sander up in the air and work on my back, at least not for the pay The Boss leaves around on the floor anyway. So the edges are still works in progress.



I'm told by the conference committee that tried to work out structural concerns with stylistic plans that those wooden edges got glassed over and will really end up as anchor points for attaching some sort of wooden stripping around the perimeter. Those guys were pretty enthused about the prospect. Me? The jury's still out.



Anyhow, that inter departmental committee ASSURES me that once this aft end plug is shaped and glassed, they will be all done adding stuff to this job. Yeah, right. But as the guy who is gonna have to heft this package back up near the shop ceiling and continue building a boat under it, I sure hope they are right.

Who knows? Maybe I should go back out there and turn the lights on. Maybe some lazy layabout will show up and get this project moving. Time's a wastin'...

Chapter 4.4

Just when you think you're leading... As I tend to point out, life is just a footrace with the undertaker and ortho surgeon. So far ol' Boothill Bob has been hanging back, not ready to make his move. But Mack the Knife came sprinting ahead a few days ago like he was gonna lap me and take all the marbles. Like a lot of us, I USED to run regularly for "fun" and exercise. Now I hobble and listen to others' stories of knee replacements. I just don't think I have the time nor patience for that sort of hobby change. Not yet, anyhow. So, it was kinda a shock to my Basic Cleopatra nature (You know, "Queen of D'Nile") when I got home and couldn't move my legs enough to get out of the car. When I finally figured out a way to manage an egress, I had the distinct impression that I was climbing a mountain on snow shoes and stilts, This has put a crimp in my Frankenbuilding for a week or better.

Ironically, the pills the doc gave me for the swelling also promote manic behavior in some people. This prescrip came with the warning to “go home and put your feet up, take it easy for a couple of weeks.” Yep. That’s exactly what I did do, too. Right. Well, other than managing to flip this enormous would be toboggan over and back a couple times.



I’ll admit to having never actually glassed a surface this big before and it seemed reasonable to do it all in one piece. Sam gave me some really nice aircraft quality fabric to work with and I used my just out of the mailbox Duckepoxy WITHOUT the Goosejuice accelerator. Not so very smart. I’ve had the shop furnace blasting full time for several days to get the ambient temps up enough for this stuff to finally set. At least there wasn’t a problem with pot life or open times.

The Big Deal with messing with this lid comes with its size and generally frail nature. It’s 6’ wide and 10’ long with no handles. I somehow also left my camera someplace else when I should have been taking pictures. But the lid went from a really nice “30 yard” wood and glass finish to up and into place and ready to get mounted without any intervening shots. I also painted it two different shades of green and then settled on three coats of antique white before mounting those hand rails and managing to get it 8’ in the air.



By the time I had it situated (on scrap 2”x4”s clamped to the frame) I was ready to go take a handful of knee pills.



Actually, way up there on those spindly (temporary) legs, the thing looks pretty forlorn. I guess it looks about like what I intended. But the word “anticlimax” did buzz on the screen.



I may change the hull color, the jury is still out on that one. But all that painted green wood is going to have hardwood staves glued on horizontally. I had most of a gallon left over, after I discovered that it was the WRONG GREEN. So it seemed like a useful primer.



Time to clean up some and get ready for the next big piece of the action. I do wonder what that’s gonna be. This discovery building is so very entertaining. Oh yeah, I did measure for overhead door clearance. I still think I’ll have 1” clearance to get this contraption out the door and then lifted up onto the trailer. I’ll have to stop adding coats of paint.

Chapter 4.5

One of my all time favorite movie scenes comes in the middle of *The Agony and the Ecstasy* where Rex Harrison yells up from the floor of the Sistine Chapel, paint splattering his papal robes, at Charlton Heston, “Buonarroti! When will you make an end!” To which Michelangelo replies from a rickety scaffold, high above, with the perfectly useless, but timeless, answer, “When I am FINISHED!”

It’s a scene that I find myself playing out over and over again. Usually I play both the pope and the painter. Sometimes, regular folks unwittingly play the impatient pontiff. But the question is essentially unchanged. “How do you know when it’s good enough?” And the answer is also pretty much unaltered from instance to instance, “You don’t.”

At least I sure don’t. This particular project is really only a few weeks old. Frankly, I’ve gotten a lot done and a lot of that is probably “good enough.” Equally hard to know which is stingier in rewards and more difficult in standards of excellence, intrinsic or extrinsic critiques. But all that is pretty extra-neous right now.

You see, this girl is supposed to look good, perform well and be different enough from anything else “out there” to make all this grunting and groaning and flailing “worth it.” So I’m attempting to make something that nobody else has ever done. At least not quite the same. Often, radically different than what anybody else has done. Talk about a hairball set of goals!

So I’ve already shared with you progress up to this point. I’m closing in on the last big unknown on the list. Maybe nobody can figure this out for me. I certainly haven’t found anybody willing to expend the brain cells and head scratching that it would apparently take to do this by the book with a view to the time, talent, equipment and resources that I can supply. As in lots, some, quite a bit and not much.

I decided to forgo the added structural enhancement of vacuum bagging and actual

mechanical fastening was pretty much hit or miss. The edge curves were cut with a Japanese pull saw to a rough approximation of the line that was itself a rough approximation of the go by line(s). Then, with the limits placed by excessive joint pain and spinal stenosis and all that stuff that comes with “the territory,” I picked up my quite heavy belt sander and proceeded to carve the edges in both fair curves and some semblance of a single plane as it wraps around this monolith. “Chainsaw surgery” if ever there was a case. When I figured either that I would probably drop the damn sander or when I actually thought it was “good enough,” I gave up the edge carving. Then, with the full spectrum of success and failure, I glued a 2” wide strip of door skin around the edges, taking huge advantage of the gap filling nature of PL.

As luck would have it, my most recent order of fiberglass tape had not yet arrived so I cut strips from a sheet of specialized glass cloth that is truly NOT a good candidate for this sort of improvisation. These strips were stuck over the edge and held it in place in a more or less accurate representation of what the thing should look like. Finally, the whole shootin’ match was glassed over in a single sheet.

The underside was varnished and then, through a feat of gymnastics, I got the whole thing up and sort of poised for the next phase, right now the phase in question, the one that has had me pretty much stalled for several days now. Mostly I just stand out there and visualize stuff. Often, in the middle of the night, I’ll be out there standing on the ladder, studying imaginary lines on imaginary window frames on imaginary structures as the boat pitches and rolls and pounds into an imaginary head sea. Checking for sight lines, checking for fair curves and potential joint failure. Mostly I’m pretending to be one of the Real Guys standing there and trying not to gag on my less than Chippendale workmanship.

Pictures don’t really convey this conundrum. Words sort of just bounce off like those bullets from Superman’s chest. And there isn’t another one quite like it to compare it to. Equal parts blessing and curse.

I carved a 1 1/2” thick cedar 2”x6” into a pair of “window sills” for fitting into the gaping hole along the sides of this thing. Then the big decision to either make individual window frames to stick up one at a time or something else altogether. I won’t further confuse the issue, other than to show these photos of what is sort of mocked up right now. This thing is gonna take a couple days to “build itself.” Then, maybe, I’ll have something decent to show.





Maybe a half day on the table saw and router table and sander and jointer will render enough tigerwood strips to glue over that obnoxious green plywood that is itself a fairing panel. Maybe. Until then, do have a productive weekend...

Chapter 4.6

OK. Things are coming together pretty quickly now.



And a few things are immediately apparent. This project isn't going to turn out as good as I pictured it. This project IS going to turn out way better than the last one did. This project has reminded me about humility. Reminded he'll, it's been shouting in my ear from the get go. I couldn't get a whole lot more humble.

I took a splash of 'pox in the eye yesterday. My fault, my screw up. There is a list I made up years ago of what I'll call "grand-motherisms." At the top of that list is something we tell each other, all the time. Be careful. There are a few more that I'll offer up right now. Don't stand too close to the edge. Don't get too tired. Don't stay out too late. And so forth. Like the researchers stipulate, there are qualitative measures and there are quantitative measures. If you can't measure it and repeat it, you can't predict it. But back to the story.

We really only know when we've not been careful when it's too late to avoid the results. Not a very helpful binary solution to a real problem. So here I sit, humbled and slowed up a bit but still in the game.

I think I'm almost ready to go on to the next phase. The fixtures, furniture and foo foo phases are all on the list now that I pretty much can see what the basic structure will look like. We discovery learners do require a lot of infrastructure to "get it," don't we? The Real Guys just get out the next drawing and toss it on the kitchen table along with their made to recipe oatmeal I suppose.

I had to see how big the top was gonna be to decide how big to make the cabin. Sort



of like calling out a bunch of chickens and eggs and asking them to line up alphabetically by height.

Not so logical, but just to keep myself thinking that I'm really making progress I think I'll dabble in the foo foo phase for a while before getting back to the structural stuff. Amid a welter of humility there is always a need for a bit of gee whiz. Just as soon as the aft bulkhead and door frame gets figured out and framed in, that is. The bottoms are tacked into place and will get glassed first thing in the morning.



Then on to foo foo stuff for a while. That poor hull has already been painted three different shades of green and even indulged me in a modeling session with Antique White. With all the underlying hues it will certainly take a couple of more coats to get this one uniform. Not too bad from about 30 yards in low light though.



If I can get those lazy layabouts on the night shift to get back to work I think they can get the decks smoothed from all the drips and glass work that's been piling up around the base of the wheelhouse. A couple of hours' worth of fairing and maybe a coat of paint will make ME feel a lot better about progress.



Because right now it looks pretty yucky. And yucky ain't pretty.



There's a stack of tigerwood on the lumber shelves that is just itching to become exterior trim. That'll make it foo foo with a capital FOO. Hopefully tomorrow we'll at least start on that phase. Time to give it up for a few hours, now.

Chapter 4.7

I got a note the other day from a fellow we all know and love, Our Father Who Art in Harper, of course. When I admitted that I had hit myself with some of his new Super Duck 'Pox instead of the proper target, he asked the real question, "Yeah, but did it stick like it was supposed to?" And I totally get it. My answer is, "sooner or later."

For reasons that are now kinda vague to my non chemistry oriented persona, he told us that his Really Brilliant Discovery wasn't going to actually work out and give us an immediately variable cure rate epoxy. But since I had the stuff here I could just go on ahead and use it. So that's what I'm doing. Ungoosed, this stuff actually takes about a day to cure and, for a Super Type A feller like myself, a whole day can be a maternity to wait for stuff to cure. But there's a bright side, too.

We Frankenbuilders don't always know what we are going to do next, what something will look like or have an earthly clue whether something will even stay together. Enter Chuck the Duck's Really Brilliant Discovery. Slather this goo onto a clutch of fiberglass cloth. Put it where you want it to stay, probably. Come back in an hour and notice that it isn't really where you want it. No problemo, senior! Just move it.

And another thing, all the cognoscenti will tell you in a heartbeat that glass doesn't like to make tight bends and they'd be right, except when using Chuck's new goo. It takes so long to harden that I can come back hours later and crease the glass and squish it into place. Inside corners, outside corners. No sweat. So tonight we're experimenting.



What if you wanted to wrap glass around the edge of a sheet of $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum? Of course, you might ask, "Why would anybody want to do such a thing?" And you'd be in pretty good company. But I dreamed this scheme up while driving to The Big City and back today and part of it required fiberglassing over foam that is glued and glassed over a sheet of thin aluminum. Turns out, this humongous lid that I made and hoisted up over much of *Miss Kathleen's* hull is about 6" too short. And there were exactly zero circumstances where I was willing to take the damn thing down and start over. So I had to think up a way to make it longer in place.

My hard fought camber needed to be matched and one of the virtues of this piece of the pie is that it's pretty light weight. So, to keep the camber I inserted a sheet of thin metal across the span and secured it from beneath. Then, to build up the requisite thickness, I bent a couple of slabs of foam over that. But I've already discovered that foam doesn't glue worth a gnat's hindquarters so I needed some sort of rigid skin to glue the next couple of components to which will all be reported in due course. For the moment, this is what the someday back porch is shaping up to look like.



The rough door opening is just under 2' wide. The type of door, type of windows, hand grabs and all that are still up for grabs. But this extension piece will have to wait, probably well into the morning. All those adorable little sub microscopic poxpeople I brushed on earlier will need to start choosing partners and dancing a whole lot closer, first. I think of it as a mini vacation. Enforced vacation, that is. All part of the experiment. And certainly part of the adventure.

Chapter 4.8

I held another staff meeting next morning, just The Boss and me. We did our inspection tour at about zero four and spent a while getting the Superduckgoo that was still not cured from the night shift pressed into shape. The results of our experiment to get fiberglass to wrap around the 5' edge of a sheet of $\frac{1}{8}$ " aluminum sheet were pretty encouraging. So, buoyed by that small advance in the art of Frankenboately, we moved on to discussions of what kind of cabin door to create.

The biggest problem with this door has to do with my precious camber of the top. Any door that fits that curve isn't going to play well with the top at any point in its swing past the closed point. We discussed bifolds and opposite swings and Dutch doors and duck boards and combos of all the above. Nothing was quite right. But the brainstorming went on and on. An hour passed and still nothing really world shaking. Finally The Boss took the floor.



I'm pretty sure he was talking about the commissioning ceremony band. Way off topic. I distinctly heard somebody mumble, "accordions and tambourines..." We weren't getting anyplace with the door discussions by then. So might as well daydream about a commissioning ceremony. Band or no.

Then, like a bolt outa the blue, the door thing was solved.

There's a whole lot of stuff that I'll have to turn over to the Design Department guys. They can usually turn my staff meeting notes into some sort of drawing. Lots of times they make cryptic notes on the Planning Department white board out in the shop. Stuff like "...tam dr on axle in tube on tracks...fix drng prob...scup??...man/elec wind...SIMPLICATE..." Notes like that.

I think they're finally on to something. I can hardly wait to see what it is. But I've got a lid extension to get figured out right now. Hopefully the shop furnace has been turning propane into cured 'pox out there. I'm anxious to get that piece done so I can get to getting on whatever is the next thing.

Now that the door thing is probably solved and especially now that the lid extension thing is probably solved, progress from the day shift is looking probable. Probably.

And speaking of progress. Tomorrow morning is the return to Pacific Standard Time hereabouts. Granted, the exact placement of that construct is an artifact of our railroad delivered history and somewhat recent demographic gerrymandering, but I have a sort of silly personal tradition that might come to advantage while "waiting for 'pox to dry." The real deal is that the hour that we "lost" is presented to us at 0200 on Sunday morning. Most people, with normal circadia, won't be conscious at that time to reap that ephemeral chrono largess. And while I do, in fact, continue often to turn perfectly good trees into dust, noise and random small chunks past zero two, I tend to hoard my once a year "extra" hour. The idea being that I save it until sometime during that day when I can put it to good use. So let's see what an extra hour tacked on to one of the shifts can produce. I do suppose I could charge it off as overtime. And in the meantime, I'm wasting the hours of this current "regular size" day.

First off, it would appear that our "bending it one eighty" experiment has been quite successful. The glass is quite tightly wrapped around the edge.



Time to start burying it under a stack of cedar trees.



This glued up chunk is the basic building block for part of that cover up exercise across the aft end of the top.

Part 1

Way back around 1985 my parents built their home by the old ice pond. The foundation had 2" foam insulation panels around the outside of it. Being a raised ranch type of house, the last 3' to 4' of foundation stuck up out of the ground, along with a few feet of pink foam insulation. Since this was ugly we broke it off at ground level, leaving me with a pile of foam to play with. I actually made my first foam boat out of one of these scraps, close to 3' long with a sail, rudder, center-board and string linking the boom to the rudder. I launched it on the ice pond and never saw it again.

I got back into foam boat building from my love of teardrop camper trailers. There is a section of the best teardrop forum in the world devoted to foamies, as they refer to them, or small teardrop campers built of foam insulation board. I had already built one teardrop out of plywood using methods I learned on my first few Mouseboats. While PLpremium construction adhesive and internal chine log construction is tough, it is also much heavier than stitch and glue and not really a savings in money.

I wanted to take my whole family camping in a small camper modeled on a teardrop for easy towing, but with room for six. The only way I could imagine to do this and keep it light enough for easy towing was to build it out of foam. Since I had built a few Mice, that experience got me comfortable with the methods before dropping a couple thousand in materials on a teardrop. I once again turned to a proven plan to get familiar with foam construction.

I built my eighth Mouseboat out of foam insulation. All of my 1/4" plywood Mice were flat bottomed designs and even over such a narrow span and even with the curve of the hull bottom, they all tended to bulge upwards in the middle of the cockpit floor (oil can) unless bracing was added. I solved this oil canning by running a strake on the bottom of the hull from bow to stern. I didn't want to do this with the foam boat though, so I finally built an original Mouseboat.

Building Seafoam

The beauty of the Mouseboat is that almost all of it can come from one standard sheet of plywood. Foam insulation board is also based on the same size, 4'x8'. However, it is often sold as 2'x8' panels. I bought three panels and traced out a Mouse. Cutting it out was even easier than cutting out plywood. Instead of a skilsaw I used a razor knife for straight edges and a steak knife for curved (later on I found that a drywall saw is my favorite foam cutting tool).

As any boat builder knows, there is an exciting moment when all those flat sections get stuck together, the 3D moment. However, the excitement was dampened a bit when I found that the bottom panels were not wide enough to fit. After some figuring I realized that the Mouse plan was drawn for 1/4" material, not 1" material. I had to remove an inch from each bulkhead panel (there are four) to make it all fit.

Using a process I learned on the foamies forum page, I glued the hull, minus the bottom, together with "folded great stuff."

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1065122803503500.1073741859.613242395358212&type=3>

Once the hull cured, I fit the bottom

30 – *Messing About in Boats*, January 2016

Experiments in Foam Boats

By Josh Withe



panels to the hull. It was very easy to make the beveled seam that forms the keel of the Mouseboat, thanks to how easy it is to cut and shave foam to shape. Once the bottom was glued on and cured I had a complete boat hull, but one that was too weak to use. The secret of strength for most foamies is a layer of fabric glued on over the foam. Then the fabric is filled with exterior house paint, this makes the fabric inert, it will not rot as the paint has completely filled the fibers of the fabric, and the paint will not scrape or peel as it is locked into the fibers and weave of the fabric. I call this PMF, poor man's fiberglass, you can read more about it on the web at:

<http://www.instructables.com/id/Poor-Mans-Fiberglass-make-nearly-anything-weatherp/>



Using Titebond II, I glued cotton fabric to the foam making the whole boat really almost a skin on frame boat. Then I filled and coated the fabric with paint. The complete boat weighs about 13 pounds, less than half of the best weight I got using stitch and glue on a Minimouse, 35 pounds.

Seafoam still isn't done, my dad put his elbow through my first attempt at a foam deck hatch, so I cut the foam decks off and made plywood decks with hatches. I hated how much they weighed though, so I cut those off and made foam decks with my gama seal deck hatches instead.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.946748062007642.1073741853.613242395358212&type=3>



I haven't gotten around to coating the foam decks but Seafoam has gone on many voyages with raw pink foam. I consider her a success but I wanted a bigger faster boat than a Mouse so I went back to the mental drawing board.

For the whole experiment in building Seafoam and some pictures of her in action, follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.823060704376379.1073741849.613242395358212&type=3>

Part 2 — Creating Sawfish

My dad loved my foam Mouseboat, he decided he wanted to buy it from me as he wanted a boat that was super light and stable. I know my parents will want faster boats for paddling near their new house in Florida, this new design had to be as stable as their SOT kayaks are but not too heavy to lift. (They each have an ocean kayak yak board, a very stable surf kayak, but find they don't use them much as, at 40 pounds, they can't lift them).

While Seafoam was a good boat, 1" foam coated with PMF, was too flexible to use as a replacement for 1/4" plywood in a much bigger hull. My mom wanted a plywood hull so she wouldn't have to worry about stomping through the hull getting in. I've read other people's attempts at foam boat building, but they really ended up with a foam cored, fiberglass boat, not really lighter and much more expensive than plywood/epoxy.

Dave Lucas has mentioned his foam boat in MAIB and on Duckworks and he said he used foam stacked up like a layer cake. While he uses beaded foam board, and then has to coat it with fiberglass and epoxy to give this weak foam strength, I wanted the foam hull to be the main strength.

By using 2" thick EPS (expanded polystyrene) I found foam that has about the same bend properties as 1/4" plywood. Gluing it into layers made it even stronger, kind of like laminating wood to make beams or plywood. Using a whole bunch of TLAR (that looks about right), I settled on a 12' long hull, 28" wide, since I know that is a safe width for people who are not so stable while not being too wide to paddle comfortably.

Using one sheet of 4'x8', 2" thick foam and one 2'x8', 2" foam, I found I could draw out the parts for a complete hull. (google "sawfish kayak" for complete plans and instructions). I glued most of the hull together with Gorilla glue (GG) and used Great Stuff (GS) in a few spots to fill large gaps. I used a flat concrete floor as my building form with a brick holding up each end to force some rocker into the hull. With all the layers glued together, I had a hull that looked kind of like my daughter had made it in her Minecraft game.

Using a Surform I carved away the blocky edges until a rounded boat hull appeared. I kind of imagined I was like the first log canoe builders, starting with a non-boat shaped object and freeing the boat locked inside.



I made *Sawfish* with forward and aft sealed storage compartments, each has a gamma seal hatch to keep it watertight. The top decks on the ends are only 1" thick foam, to make them stronger I added "beams" of foam under the deck (the next boat will have wooden beams). Sealed compartments in a foam boat are not needed for flotation but, instead, to keep drinks and lunch cool and our wallet, car keys, phone, camera, towel, etc, dry.

Since foam is a weak material when pulled on, I ended up attaching handles to the hull using holes through the hull to make it strong. After boring a 1/2" hole through the hull, I pumped the hole full of PL premium. Using a coat hanger I pushed the end of a nylon strap all the way into the hull, then threaded a section of plastic pipe onto the strap for a handle. I used the coat hanger to push the other end of the nylon strap into the opposite side of the hull as deep as it would go. The handle is on a loop running through the hull. Unless I rip the end off the kayak, the handles will not come off, as the foam they run through is held in place by the PMF skin.

We had an exceptionally long snowy winter up here (yay, great cross country skiing!) so, while I waited for the snow to melt, I cut out enough ribs, noses and bottoms for another three *Sawfish*. I got a second hull almost to the sanding to shape stage before the weather broke and the snow was gone.

Launch

With a boat shaped hull that weighed 13 pounds, I set off one cool, blustery spring day for the local pond. The boat was just raw, pink foam, boat shaped, but not anything seen before around here. As I unstrapped the kayak, more than one fisherman came over to ask what I was launching. One of them got out his phone and videoed the whole launch, I'm sure he thought it would be funny to see me swimming. Afterwards I saw him showing the video to others around the pond.

I found that my 180 pounds didn't even push the bottom layer of foam below the water. When I test leaned the hull, water ran in through the GG seams. That is OK though, they don't have to be watertight, just strong. I took *Sawfish* for a short paddle, testing how fast the boat was, how stable and how she turned. I was impressed that my first boat design worked so well, everyone else was impressed that it didn't fall apart and leave me swimming.



I coated the hull with PMF, then painted with an unusual paint job since *Sawfish* would be a float in an Independence Day parade before I ever got to paddle the finished hull.



I ended up adding a skeg, made from a plastic cutting board, to cure a slight tendency to wander while paddling.



Back when I started writing this, I mentioned that I wanted to build a foam camper for six. Once *Sawfish* was complete and launched, I stopped building boats and went full time into building a foam camper. We already had a reservation at a campground in the Adirondacks, I had to build enough of a camper for us to be able to stay in it. We missed the first two days of our reservation due to last minute details, but rolled onto the campground with our foam camper loaded to the gills with boats and camping gear.

Sawfish and my whole fleet had a busy week. While my sister and her family camped with our kids on one pond, my wife and I slept in the foam camper four miles away. We traveled back and forth by water, paddling back each night by the light of the moon.

Sawfish proved to be much faster than any of the Mouseboats and able to haul a good load of gear in and out of the campsite. One feature of that area of the Adirondacks is an abundance of ponds, lakes and rivers, many so close together you can carry from one to the next along marked canoe carry paths. *Sawfish* was perfect for this, thanks to her finished weight of 22 pounds, carrying between ponds was no big deal. While other paddlers were taking one trip with the boat(s) and a second for their gear, I could hike *Sawfish* on one shoulder and the seat on my other shoulder, then walk off with my paddle in one hand. I even tried Dave Lucas's idea of wearing *Sawfish* like a hat, thanks to the soft foam hull it was very comfortable, but it limited my view of the Adirondack woods.

Part 3 – *Sawfish*

Once we got back from our camping trip, I finally got to use *Sawfish* the way I dreamed of. She has been strapped to the roof of my car for weeks, exploring the local ponds and rivers after work. Using my GPS I've discovered that I can paddle *Sawfish* forever at 4mph and can sprint at 5.5mph when I want to. She draws less than 1" of water, allowing me to sneak into areas most kayaks cannot. Thanks to the light hull I can park and walk a good distance to launch her, something I find most paddlers avoid.

Before I had a chance to test her stability completely, my daughter had already found that she can paddle *Sawfish* standing up. Since then I've tried it and found I can stand and paddle *Sawfish* like an SUP. This probably won't work for the average first timer, or people with only average balance, but I have one guy building a *Sawfish* a few inches wider so he can stand and cast. I like the ability to use the boat the way I want, while I think SUPs are good exercise, I know for a fact they are SLOW! I prefer to have the option to sit and go fast.

I am going to tweak the cockpit position though, as I find the best speed comes when I slide my seat forward until my feet are resting against the forward bulkhead. Carrying a child or dog forward would also trim the boat correctly. Looking at "real" kayaks, I see the paddler's body should be located just aft of the center of the boat.

I had never found a comfortable paddling seat, stadium chairs didn't cut it, neither did the \$40 motorboat padded chairs. I finally found a folding seat that I can paddle an hour or two on without my rear going numb or aching. Searching around on the web I've found this seat sold as the Oniva Seat on many websites. It isn't waterproof and I don't know if it will act as flotation, but it is the only thing that works. I found it sold in a local discount chain that can only be found in the northeast US. However, the name Oniva wasn't on it anywhere. Many paddling sites recommend a seat called the "sit backer," I'm too cheap to pay what those go for. I get my seats for \$15.

While I made this boat to be the "perfect" boat for my parents and older kids, once I told my dad about *Sawfish*, he was sure he wouldn't want it. I finally had to tell him to wait and see once he had a chance to paddle both boats side by side.

Columbus Day weekend my family got together over a few days. On Monday we all got out on the ice pond behind my parents'

house. I brought my stack of mouse boats, *Sawfish* and a plastic kayak I found by the highway. The older kids took off in four boats right off, when I caught up with them in my parents' canoe they were at the upper end of the pond, carrying both boats up to the next pond. One pair had the foam mouse, *Seafoam*, and one had *Sawfish*. (I wonder why they chose the foam and not plastic or plywood?) Thanks to the lightweight hulls, four of those kids got to explore the next pond up in the chain, somewhere I've never been.



After they returned (the upper pond had many downed trees in it) I got my dad into *Sawfish*, turns out he loved it! As I planned, the hull is wide enough for him to feel stable in and the length makes it easy to drive and gives it much better speed: <https://youtu.be/kqQq0cIDDOY>. After that I got my mom out in *Sawfish*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XIOEBS04uo>. She wasn't so sure about the strength of foam, but after getting in and paddling a short way, she was convinced. With my dad in *Seafoam* we spent the next 45 minutes or so cruising from one end of the pond to the other, enjoying the late fall foliage and warm sunshine. The kind of day you never want to forget.



My mom said she found the boat very easy to paddle. Thanks to the late fall and lack of rain the pond was almost a foot low, this meant we were pushing through water weeds on almost the whole pond. Thanks to the flat bottom, *Sawfish* pushed right over the weeds without feeling any real drag. *Seafoam* and the plastic kayak, being V-bottomed, dug in much more.

My parents never noticed the big gouges my J-bars wore into the hull (I'll not be using the J-bars again). To me this is one great part of a foam hull, in spite of the fabric being split and the foam being dented, the hull was still watertight, EPS is waterproof all by itself. Once again I, the builder, knew there was a defect, one that would have put any plywood boat out of commission. But nobody else noticed and no water found a way in, no plywood delaminated. When I get around to it this winter I'll fill those gouges with foam, then glue a new patch of cheap fabric over it, when the glue and paint are dry I'll sand it smooth (ish) and call it good. Smaller dents and grooves tend to pop back out over time. Heating dents with a steam iron causes the foam to "heat activate" and smooth right out. Try that with any fiberglass skinned foam kayak!

So far I have the second hull glued up in layers, but not sanded to shape yet, I'm rethinking the cockpit position on it. I plan on having my parents new foam kayaks ready to launch for next summer.

You can see/follow the builds of these two *Sawfish* kayaks and any other designs or ideas I have cooking on my Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Rowerwet/?ref=hl>.

Sawfish has her own album at <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1085714464777667.1073741861.613242395358212&type=3>. I called the album where I designed *Sawfish* "foam boat #3" as it was my third foam boat, if you don't count that chunk I set adrift on the ice pond and an Instructable: <http://www.instructables.com/id/Sawfish-foam-kayak-build-a-funtional-light-wieght/>

I entered the Instructable in two contests and won second place both times. Based on

the number of page views and comments I see, there should be a good fleet of these hitting the water in the coming year.

I am also mentally designing at least two more foam kayak designs, a much shorter boat for kids and a longer (faster?) V-bottom design that may be a flop, or not. I also want to get back to my SUP idea. I know my kids want their own and I'm not made of money. I also have an idea to make a foam pulling boat. Stay tuned...

Where Did This Start?

As I stated in Part 1, I made my first foam boat to learn more about building with foam so I would be comfortable building a teardrop in foam. On the teardrop site tnttt.com there had been a few teardrops built with foam, but it seems everyone does it their own way. I remembered a builder many years ago in *MAIB* (Mississippi Bob?) building a dinghy made of foam. As I recall he used a good bit of fiberglass and epoxy to make the panels as strong as plywood, the boat was strong and rot proof but he said it was heavy. The fiberglass added too much weight.

On tnttt.com I found a guy who built a foam Puddle Duck Racer, from what he said, the foam was fine until he sailed it onto rocks, he put a plywood bottom on after that.

Searching the web found a few more builders, but everyone uses a bunch of epoxy and fiberglass to skin the hull and make the seams.

As far as I could find I was the first one to build a boat of foam skinned with regular old fabric. The experiment worked fine with *Seafoam* having done many trips without an issue. When I shared the idea on a big wooden boat blog it got trashed, but the fact that *Seafoam* and now *Sawfish* are still going strong prove otherwise. I did find out that fabric skin as a hull coating goes back to ancient Egyptian boat building, and probably before that.


About the time I was finally convinced *Seafoam* was a useful boat and began to let other people know about it, I saw the first of Dave Lucas' mentions of a foam kayak. Reading his building method for the first "too narrow" design gave me the idea for *Sawfish*, a foam layer cake. While his boats use cheaper foam and expensive coating, I use more expensive foam and a much cheaper coating. I built *Sawfish* for \$110 the best I can figure.

Why *Sawfish*?

Way back when I was short, I got a bunch of old records my dad had as a kid. One of the 78rpm ones had a story about Bozo the clown going deep sea diving. At the end he is trapped underwater and a sawfish cuts a hole to let him out of the shipwreck. Right after that my parents took me to the New England Aquarium where they had a real live sawfish. I was fascinated. So now while using a drywall saw to cut the hull out of the foam board the name came to me.



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Solar Powered Boating

Can Solar Provide Primary Propulsion for Recreational Boats?

By Greg Hopkins, Nextwave Boat Shop
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The *Amberwave*, a 23' Phil Bolger designed wooden fantail launch built about 15 years ago, was a good candidate for an electric drive and conversion of the cloth canopy to a solar array. Four solar panels fit the canopy area and the specs indicated they would provide a little less than a kilowatt of power for the 48 volt motors and battery array.



The first goal was to see if the solar array would provide enough charge during the week so that we could run the boat for eight hours on the weekend without needing shore power. The second goal was to see how fast the boat would go on pure sunpower. Here are the details:

Two Minnkota 2hp permanently submerged electric drives

200amps of AGM batteries onboard configured as a 48 volt system (eight batteries in total)

Morningstar MPPT solar controller

Alt-E solar panels

Vectron on-board monitor

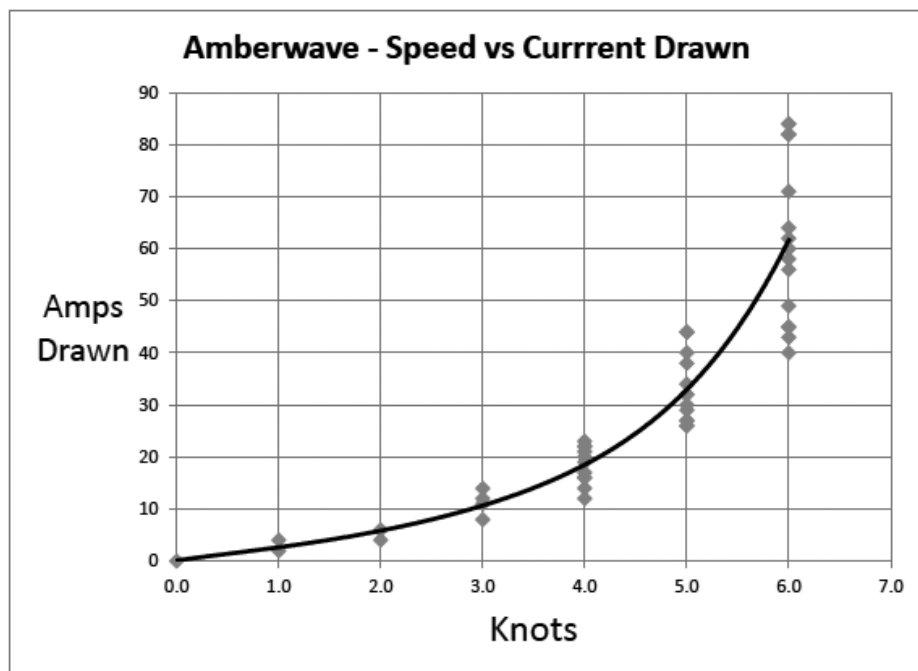
Sevcon motor controller

And the results: We launched October 1 on Newfound Lake in Hebron, New Hampshire, under a bright but not overhead sun. The panels reported a pretty consistent 14 amps. Output would, of course, drop if a cloud came by and we could even get a little extra if we "tilted" the boat a few degrees. For our 200amp battery bank, 14 amps meant that the battery could be fully recharged in about 14 hours (assuming 80% discharge). Goal #1 of collecting energy during the week and operating on the weekend "for free" is clearly doable. July and August would be ideal.

The chart shows hull speed in knots versus current drawn. The hull speed of the boat (the approximate maximum speed the boat can go) is about 6.7 knots. Cruising on the sun's 14 amps alone would give us 4 knots. Not bad! In fact, we cruised on only sun power for the length of Newfound Lake.

Trying to overpower this fantail launch by giving the boat max power (maybe 60amps) only causes the stern to sit down, generate a big wake with no increase in speed, and waste energy. 30amps was the sweet spot for cruising at 5 to 6 knots.

The sea trials lasted about eight hours. When I checked the battery reserve it showed 76%. We put the boat on the trailer, drove home for three hours and the batteries were



back to 100%. The sun is ubiquitous even when the boat is on the trailer.

Next Steps: The boat needs some TLC, floors, inlays, varnish, etc. The boat should be on the network. I'd like to get access to all info on the boat (current location, current speed, state of charge, current solar panel performance, remaining range, etc). This means putting a wireless cellular modem on board and networking the controllers and writing some software. No problem with onboard power. Investigate more efficient props that use less current to reach hull speed. Promote the concept of solar powered boating.

Solar as primary power is not an ocean going technology yet, but for the lakes of New England it's a great fit. The current popularity of pontoon boats coupled with a solar canopies and electric drives could be very popular. Clean, quiet freshwater boating should also have some appeal to folks who care about the quality of our lakes.

In support of this project, Adam DiSchino at altE helped with the solar panel selection, Zak Robinson did an excellent job of building the canopy structure to support the panels, Matt Sullivan rebuilt the trailer and provided much guidance, Jeff Hillier assisted in the launch and Jesse at Back Channel Canvas did a nice job of giving the boat that classic look.





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The Bastardized Beetle Sailed Finally

By Greg Grundtisch



I have been chronicling the rebuilding of this once thought of as a lost cause Beetle Cat hull that I "won" on eBay in October 2014. It was in such poor condition that most thought it was not worth the effort to spend time and money on such a sad, rotted little boat. I (possibly foolishly) see potential in boats that most "sensible people" would not.

When I returned from Wareham, Massachusetts, with this little Beetle hull and showed it to my bride, the lovely and talented Naomi, she took a cursory look and then asked, "Can this really be restored, it is in really bad shape?" "Of course it can," I said, not knowing just how bad it really was at that time.

I began to remove the ceiling (floorboards) that simply pulled out of the rotted floors and ribs. The ribs were all covered with fiberglass tape that held water and rot in place very nicely. Most of the glass tape pulled off easily too, and so did most of the ribs as they were mostly dust or mush in the places that still held moisture.

On second thought, maybe this was where I might have given some consideration for just cutting my losses. But growing up with my grandfather Howard Grundtisch who said that anything can be fixed (and he was remarkably good at fixing things) and my father Glenn Grundtisch, who always told us never give up and don't let them see concern on your face, I decided to just move ahead, being ignorant (rather blissfully) of how to proceed or what the correct method was for properly restoring a Beetle Cat.

I completely removed everything from the inside of the hull except the centerboard trunk, and removed all the decking. I then braced it back into almost the correct shape. The fiberglass cloth was holding the planks together with the keel with a handful of ribs that somehow survived.

This was my winter project for 2014-15 and it started out reasonably well, if not time consuming, and continued so through the winter and spring. I have written about the procedures of this restoration in several articles in past issues. When spring arrived the hull was finished and the rigging begun. I had gotten a mast, spars and a sail from Mr

Donald Phipps. These were major time and cost savings. Indirectly Donald saved the restoration by offering me these items at a very reasonable cost.

I also had to buy some items from the Beetle Boat Shop. There I met Michelle Buonicontio and Bill Womack, the owner. Both were very helpful showing me how things fit properly and what I needed to complete the restoration. I also got a tour of the Beetle shop and facilities. Talented, personable, knowledgeable people work in this very clean, well organized shop.

I also got some wooden cleats from the Winter Brothers at Woodenmarine cleats.com. They not only look great but are very well made and finished, which adds to the good looks of the boat.

I'll skip to the chase. The Beetle Cat sails! And sails very well. It is not a perfect restoration as costs made it necessary to make some minor changes, but you would have to look close to notice and it doesn't seem to have any effect on performance. Naomi and I had only one chance to sail the little cat-boat this season. The boat was finished in early summer but opportunity to sail was elusive due to other obligations and a few sailing opportunities on different boats. There's always next year and *Joy*, the name we chose for her, will be the first to go in in May 2016. Naomi has made that a direct order. She can be rather strident when it comes to sailing.

The lack of sailing time on the Beetle Cat is the reason we only have one photo of it sailing. Naomi sailed her and I took a couple of pictures. We had hoped to find someone to take pictures for us but no one was available that day. There may be a couple of photos in the cameras of some of the Buffalo Maritime Centers *Scajaquada* crew from the regular Tuesday evening sails. We sailed along with them as a bit of a safety check, just in case anything went wrong. Like the time I capsized a Skipjack on her maiden voyage.

This is the first Beetle Cat I have sailed. I have read about them for years and many people sing the praises for these little boats. I always thought they looked good but never understood why they were so highly regarded or sought after, especially one in which you have to sit on the floor. That is, until I sailed it.

Wow, what a very comfortable boat that sails effortlessly with a feel of a larger boat. It is surprisingly stable and responsive. She is easy to sail and you look good doing it. It is the roomiest boat of its size ever built. Plenty of room to stretch out and not have to hit your shins on inside encumbrances.

Joy is a joy to sail. Now I get it!



Years ago, while out watching the schooner races in and out of San Diego, past Point Loma, I had guests aboard my 30' sailboat. We were beating our way into the bay with that rather fierce wind that can tumble over the spine of PL, probably holding 7+ on the steam gauge. Chatting among ourselves in the cockpit.

Then came a voice from a man suspended in space behind me and somewhat above. The voice said, "Hey buddy, can ya come a little to the left and let us by?" First glance over my shoulder revealed a cast bronze star. Immediately followed by a ve^ory long widowmaker.



The owner of the voice had his feet about my eye level. That jibboom was attached to a schooner who could be *Adventuress*, or her twin sister, separated at birth. The roar from her multiple jibs and that impressive bone in her teeth said it all. "Move over. Now!"

Schooner *Adventuress*

By Dan Rogers

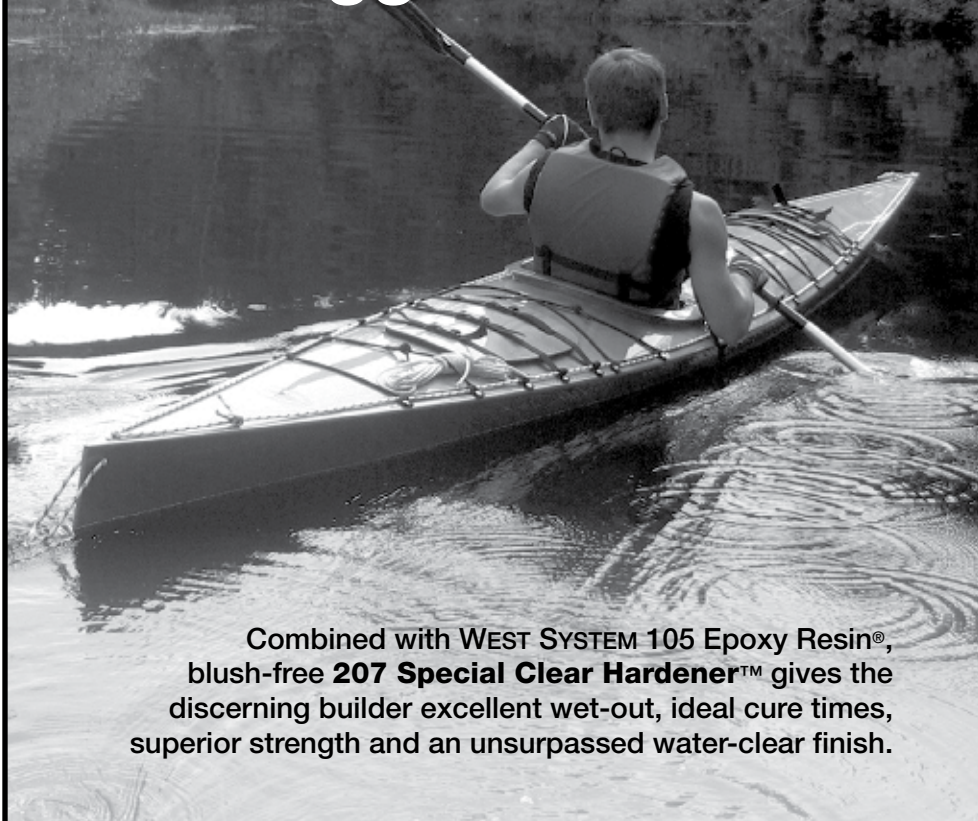


I, of course, put the wheel up. She thundered on by like a speeding train roaring past a lonely road crossing. She left an indelible mark, now long after. Majestic.

S/V Adventuress is now down at the Gig Harbor, Washington, city public dock. She's pretty impressive, stop by at take a look if you get a chance. You can even take a tour.



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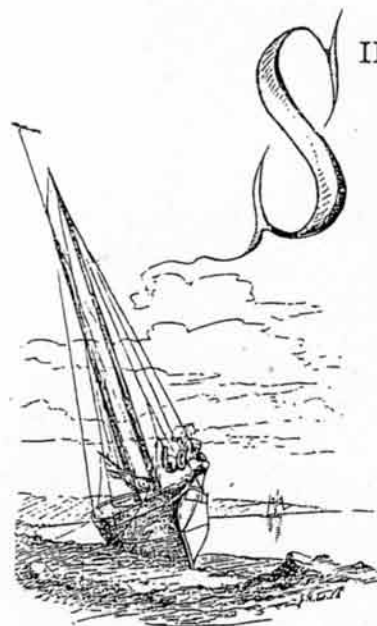
VOL. V.

SEPTEMBER, 1888.

NO. 5.

AMERICAN YACHTING IN 1888.

BY S. G. W. BENJAMIN.



SINCE Jennie Lind carried New York by storm, and gave foreign singers a great popular vogue in the United States, no fancy has taken such general and lasting hold on our people as the taste for yachting within the last decade. Every one talks of cutters, sloops, "skimming dishes," center boards and keels, whether he knows anything or nothing about them. Portraits of famous yachts are to be seen in every shop window; yachting scenes vie with the pictures of noted beauties on cigar boxes; models of yachts, executed with knowledge and skill, serve to attract crowds in shop windows and liquor saloons, made of every material, in one instance the hull being entirely constructed of the floats of fishing lines and the sails embroidered with floss silk. The fashion has seized even the undertakers: a clever model of a schooner-yacht has been somewhat incongruously used by an undertaker to attract the passers-by to his window. The literature of yachting has also increased with amazing rapidity, the works on the subject now forming a library. These are but a few of the signs which show the direction of the popular current.

Until recently this interest was confined

to a very small number of our people, a remarkable fact, considering the figure once made by our shipbuilders and mariners. A few years ago, however, some of our enthusiastic yachtsmen took a notion to introduce nautical heresy into yachting circles by whispering doubts as to the efficacy of the American centerboard type, actually branding it with the contemptuous title of "skimming-dish." They went farther, and in spite of all the American yachts that had weathered the gales of the Atlantic, asserted that we could not build sea-worthy yachts, but only "floating coffins," and, worse still, declared that, in order to know how to build yachts, we must take lessons in the shipyards of England.

If these "cuttah" men had merely confined themselves to talking, the matter would have ended there; but they insisted on importing English plans, and actually proceeded both to build cutters here and to import them—real out-and-out extreme British yachts. Nay, more, they contrived, by an insidious plot, to foist a rabid anglo-maniac on the staff of one of our leading sporting periodicals. In such a thorough designer and builder as Mr. Piepgrass, these enthusiasts likewise found an excellent collaborator, and typical cutters, like the *Oriva* and *Bedouin*, built here, or imported ones like the *Stranger* or the *Madge*, showed the earnestness of the new movement.

The aggressiveness of the "cutter" men naturally aroused an intense feeling on the part of the upholders of the native type, whether keel or centerboard. A number of

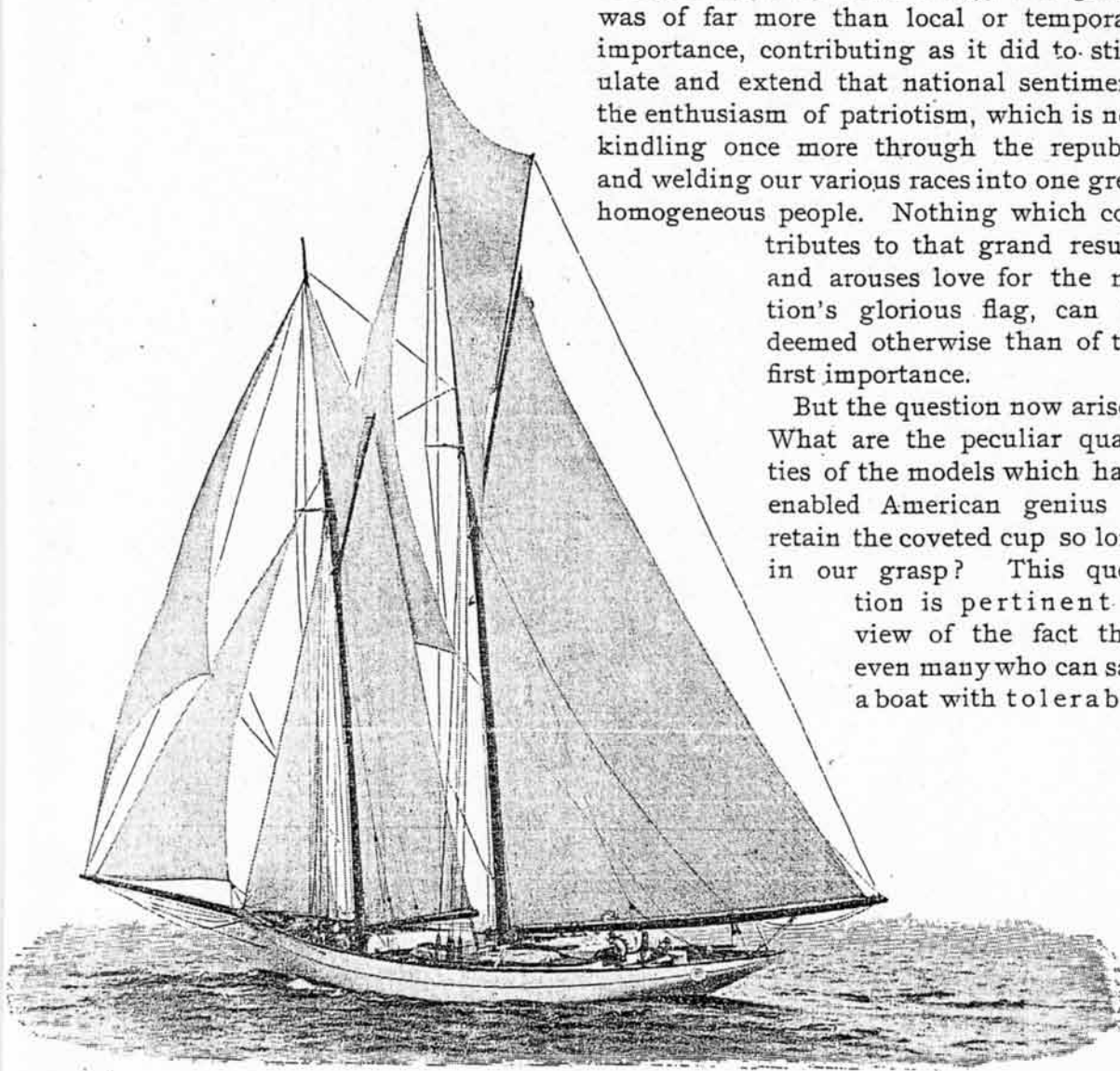
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races between two or three small imported cutters of the extreme type, deep, narrow, and depending entirely on outside lead ballast, and sloops of corresponding dimensions, displayed such remarkable qualities in the cutters, although not always successful, that wide interest was not only aroused, but anxiety as well, lest by their steady efforts to improve, the English yachtsmen should ere long succeed in recovering the America's cup.

The results of the three great and remarkable trials, in which *Genesta*, *Galatea*, and *Thistle*, the latter the swiftest yacht ever launched in Great Britain, were successively vanquished, are too recent and too well known to require more than the mere mention here. The important facts concerning these races, destined to lasting consequences, are that a second time in history America

has produced an unrivaled yacht design and an altogether new and distinct type or model, which has modified prevailing notions of yacht building, and is likely to continue, at least as a fashion, for years to come, although it is not in all respects superior to the plan of our old sloops and schooners. Apropos of these results, it is not inappropriate to call attention in this place to the fact that the proverbial ingratitude of republics has for once, at least, been disproved in the case of the builder and designer of the three winning yachts, General Paine and Mr. Burgess. A fund was raised by popular subscription and presented to the latter, and the city of Boston gave an elaborate reception to both gentlemen within the historic walls of Faneuil Hall, October 7, 1887. It was realized by the good people of Boston that the event which they had brought about by their energy and genius was of far more than local or temporary importance, contributing as it did to stimulate and extend that national sentiment, the enthusiasm of patriotism, which is now kindling once more through the republic and welding our various races into one great homogeneous people. Nothing which contributes to that grand result, and arouses love for the nation's glorious flag, can be deemed otherwise than of the first importance.

But the question now arises, What are the peculiar qualities of the models which have enabled American genius to retain the coveted cup so long in our grasp? This question is pertinent in view of the fact that even many who can sail a boat with tolerable

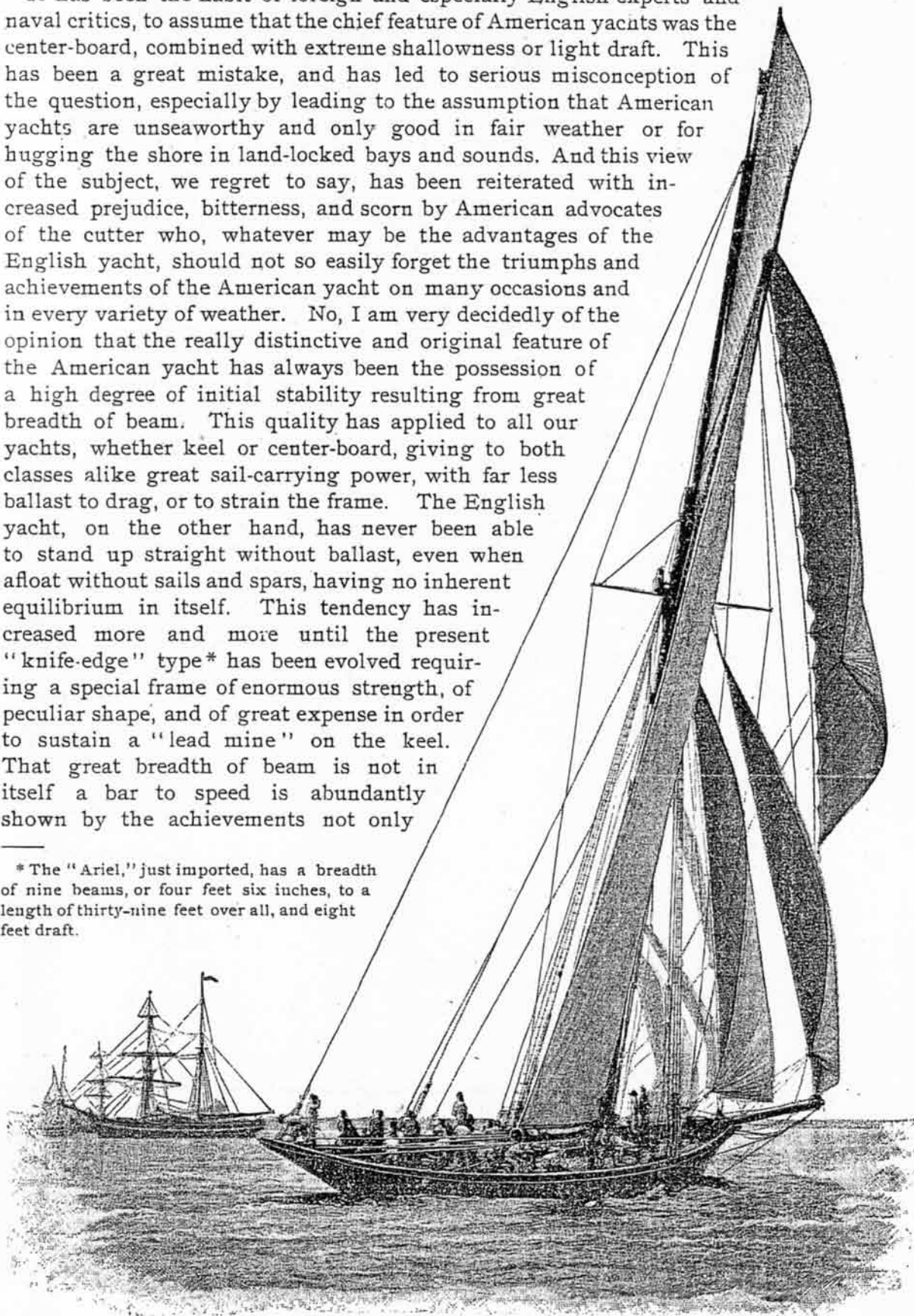


THE GRAYLING.

skill, are unable to analyze and define the exact difference between an English cutter and an American sloop, and are hence unable to perceive the exact points of change, development and progress made in recent years in the modeling of American yachts.

It has been the habit of foreign and especially English experts and naval critics, to assume that the chief feature of American yachts was the center-board, combined with extreme shallowness or light draft. This has been a great mistake, and has led to serious misconception of the question, especially by leading to the assumption that American yachts are unseaworthy and only good in fair weather or for hugging the shore in land-locked bays and sounds. And this view of the subject, we regret to say, has been reiterated with increased prejudice, bitterness, and scorn by American advocates of the cutter who, whatever may be the advantages of the English yacht, should not so easily forget the triumphs and achievements of the American yacht on many occasions and in every variety of weather. No, I am very decidedly of the opinion that the really distinctive and original feature of the American yacht has always been the possession of a high degree of initial stability resulting from great breadth of beam. This quality has applied to all our yachts, whether keel or center-board, giving to both classes alike great sail-carrying power, with far less ballast to drag, or to strain the frame. The English yacht, on the other hand, has never been able to stand up straight without ballast, even when afloat without sails and spars, having no inherent equilibrium in itself. This tendency has increased more and more until the present "knife-edge" type* has been evolved requiring a special frame of enormous strength, of peculiar shape, and of great expense in order to sustain a "lead mine" on the keel. That great breadth of beam is not in itself a bar to speed is abundantly shown by the achievements not only

* The "Ariel," just imported, has a breadth of nine beams, or four feet six inches, to a length of thirty-nine feet over all, and eight feet draft.



THE THISTLE



Edward Burgess

of our yachts but also of our merchant marine. The breadth of our clippers was always considerably in excess of that of the smartest Aberdeen tea clippers, but no foreign sailing-ship that ever floated has equaled the astonishing speed of our own broadly-shaped clippers. Let no American ever forget this fact.

It is for this reason that we are not in favor of taxing the sail plan in yacht races, a new system now coming into vogue, which the writer himself one time inclined to favor. Given three dimensions, length on the waterline *in sailing trim*, in order to avoid tonnage cheating, breadth and depth, the question is, Who can build the ship with those three qualities that will go the fastest out of seven races?—three races being really insufficient as a fair test of vessels closely matched. One party asserts that the ship ninety feet long, of lesser beam, will beat the one of greater beam; the other side claims that the wide ninety-foot boat must win. That is the point at issue in a nutshell, as regards types, be the models what they may in other respects, such as the run, the entrance, the dead rise, etc. But, says the first party, the wider

boat can carry more sail to her length, and therefore must by so much give allowance to the narrower boat. Quite the contrary, for the larger spread of canvas implies greater bulk to force through the water. Nor is it a question of displacement, for with equal length and draft the wider model may displace a larger tonnage. It is a vexing, hair-splitting, soul-harrowing question. But after all, the simplest solution is that of length alone as the basis of measurement. Bulk is not a sufficient index, for many a ship of five hundred tons has made the run to China in less time than some of fifteen hundred tons.

We are the more inclined to insist that initial stability depending on breadth is the especial feature of the American yacht, because, as we propose to show, this continues to be retained by our best contemporary

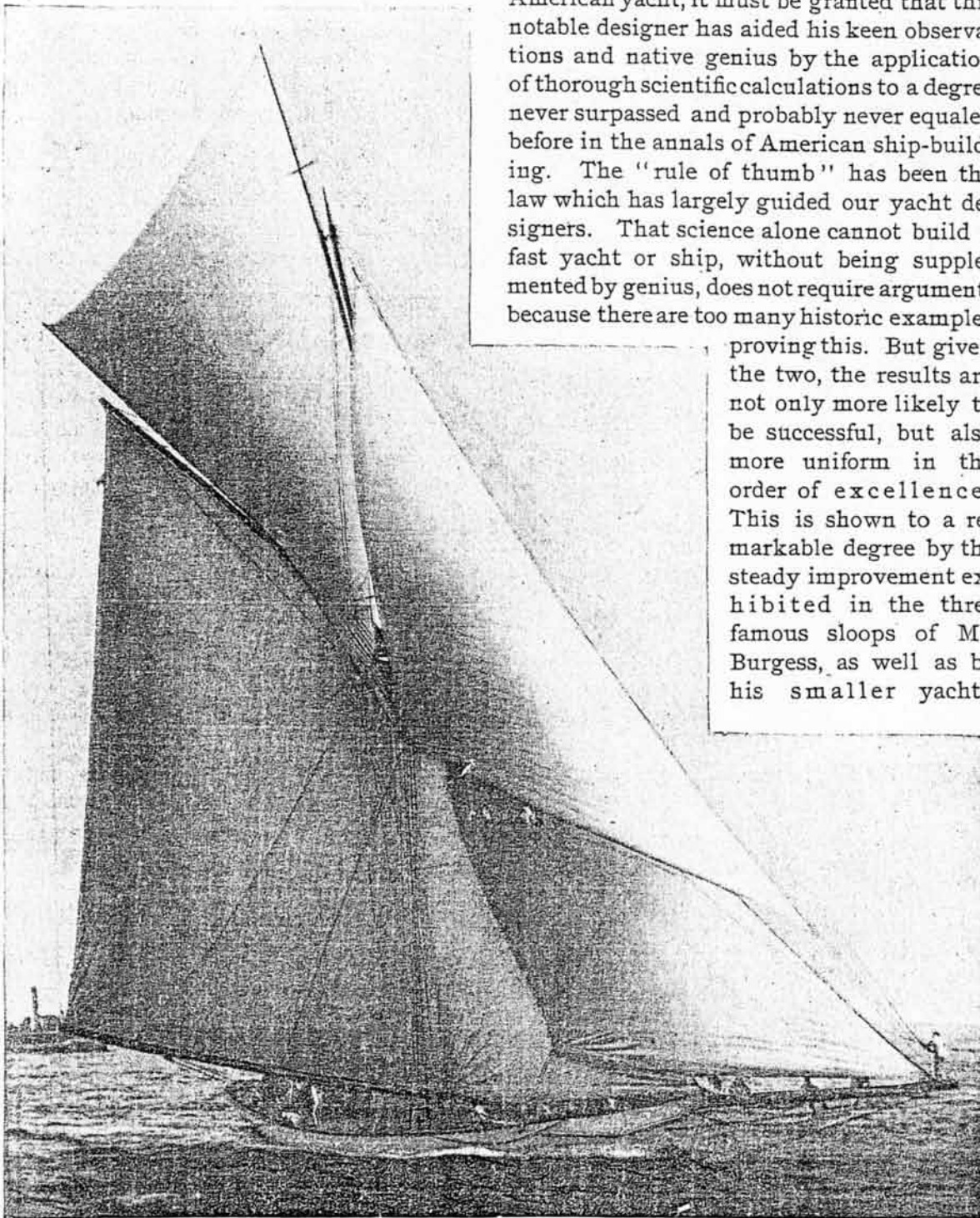
yacht designers, while approximating in almost every other detail to the typical British yacht of the present time. At the same time—and this is very important—it is almost the only point in which the English yachtsmen have yielded to our ideas, and have condescended to borrow from our designers, as was evidenced by the fastest yacht ever built in Great Britain, and the hardest one to beat in the international races—we refer, of course, to the famous *Thistle*. The *Genesta*, our rival in the first of the three great races, has a length of eighty-one feet on the water line, and fifteen feet beam, to the *Mayflower's* eighty-five feet seven inches water line, and twenty-three feet six and one-half inches beam. The *Thistle*, to a length on the water line of 86.46 feet, has 20.35 feet beam, to the *Volunteer's* 85.88 water line, and 23.2 inches beam. Here, indeed, is a decided concession and approximation of types. The three feet of difference in favor of the *Volunteer* was sufficient to turn the scale, for it gave the sloop more bilge and stability; with fifteen tons less ballast than the *Thistle* she was able to spread nine thousand two hundred and sixty square

feet of canvas to her rival's eight thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight feet, although nearly one foot shorter. Add to this the advantage of the centerboard for eating to windward, and the reasons for the victory of the *Volunteer* are not difficult of discovery. The centerboard alone would not have accomplished this result, for the centerboard adds nothing to stability. It was beam first, and, therefore, we insist that the distinguishing feature of the American yacht

to-day is beam, and to abolish it, after all it has done toward our yachting triumphs, and build narrow craft like the English cutters, is emphatically to give away the game with insufficient advantages in return.

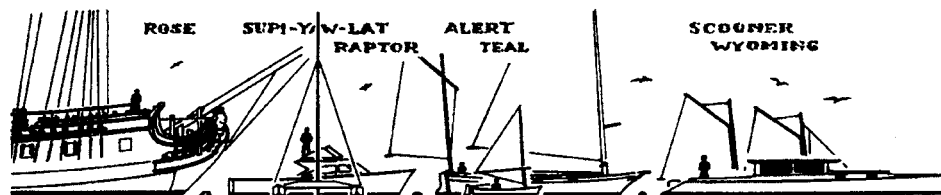
An examination of the comparative details of the English model and the Burgess compromise will still further prove the truth of our statement regarding the approximation of the Burgess sloops and schooners to the English. In making these changes in the American yacht, it must be granted that this notable designer has aided his keen observations and native genius by the application of thorough scientific calculations to a degree never surpassed and probably never equaled before in the annals of American ship-building. The "rule of thumb" has been the law which has largely guided our yacht designers. That science alone cannot build a fast yacht or ship, without being supplemented by genius, does not require argument, because there are too many historic examples

proving this. But given the two, the results are not only more likely to be successful, but also more uniform in the order of excellence. This is shown to a remarkable degree by the steady improvement exhibited in the three famous sloops of Mr. Burgess, as well as by his smaller yachts.



THE VOLUNTEER.

Photographed by J. S. Johnston.



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A MICRO "Club Racer" version? Well, after all the (endless?!) excitement around that 39'x 225hp long 25+kts go fast machine, it seems indeed time for a change of pace. This is racing under a definition of sitting comfortably in good company of perhaps six adults on this 15.5' hull, possibly with decent freshly sizzled food, of course a rich assortment of beverages, all at the top speed of just over 5 knots, with just a bunch of friends or indeed a yacht club.

MICRO was Phil's Design #422, put on paper in March of 1982. With this small two some cruiser under a cat yawl rig he responded to requests for a fast to build trailer cruiser fit for building and then storage in nearly any garage, towable by nothing much more stout than a compact car.

By November of 1983, Phil completed Design #449 OLD SHOE, at 11'7"x5'1"x1'3" a smaller variation on the MICRO theme, same shallow long keel, square mid section and that characteristic pug nose. This time, however, he did not propose an even smaller cruising layout but an open boat daysailer, to be comfortable, undramatic, not nerve-wracking, as comfortable as indeed an old shoe.

Simplicity for a lot of fun in return in under 12' with good non athletic seating positions for up to four adults, 2+2 or 3+1, with feet down in a well, with two sails and the rudder something to do for three, plus a navigator perhaps. No centerboard case or mast to interfere with a fine spreading out of folks and their legs for a decent balance on such a short hull. The photos here speak for themselves.

After folks confirmed how much this geometry of just a big unspoiled cockpit did for taking non sailors or aging near ex sailors

Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #495 in *MAIB*

MICRO Club Racer Version Design #422

15'4"/15'11" x 6' x 1'9"/2' + x 4hp x
210/275sf Sail Area

along for a fine day under sail, doing such a layout on the MICRO hull seemed the obvious thing to do. Phil and I had talked about it periodically when OLD SHOE came up. As it happened, a lot of other things got to be on the agenda, the usual mix of the scheduled and the disruptive. So it is only now by late 2015 that this layout is featured as an option for MICRO.

This layout will work on an existing MICRO, just rebuilt to this all cockpit layout. Shown in the sail plan view is the more recent MICRO II rig with her gaff main as the hull's actual vertical bow edge. And in her general arrangement drawing the original MICRO rig geometry is assumed, the one also featured in this nice shot of the original configuration MICRO, *Banty*, the McDaniels of Indiana recently shared with me.

Shown on the Club Racer's sail plan are indeed six folks, four on the windward side and two to the lee, spread out in her near 10' long cockpit, for all we know with cushions in addition to the sloping backrest. The structural assumptions are a combination of original bulkheads, some modified, plus new ones. Whether all of them would be solid or

opened up to allow longer items to be stowed under the seating surfaces depends upon personal choices. What we'd want to build in for sure is the 3" wide clamp lamination running inside of the topsides' upper edge, braced by the sloping solidly installed backrests, both to form a decent way support her shape without a big dividing bulkhead in her middle or any deck. One could have divided the seating by that #5 bulkhead, but that would have permanently ruled out the chance to stretch out in her on either side, with hopefully someone not falling asleep at the helm and sheets as well.

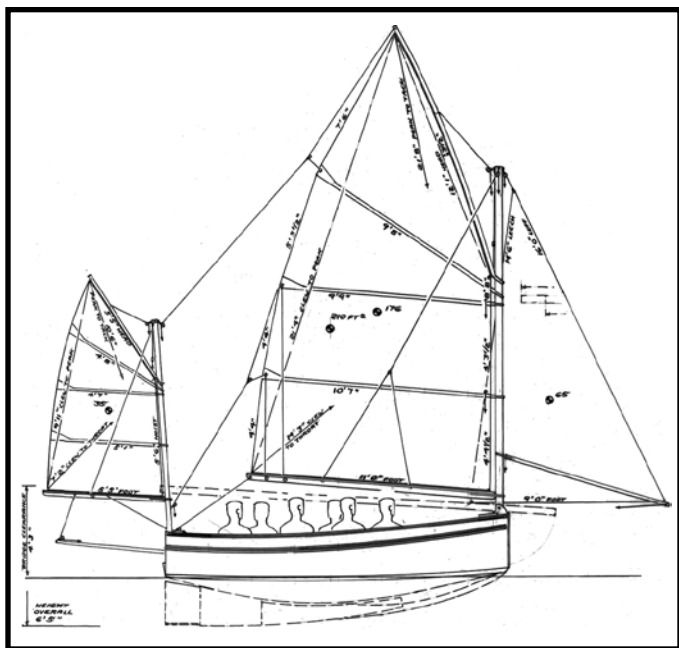
With the MICRO II rig geometry and her folding mainmast, never an option in the original, should a bit of foul weather interrupt the day you'd drop the anchor, lower the mainmast and cover everything with a boom tent/boat cover she should already have anyway to keep the rain out when at rest. And what works tied to the float and during a downpour will certainly work for camp cruising this layout with two adults plus a kid or dog in the bilge.

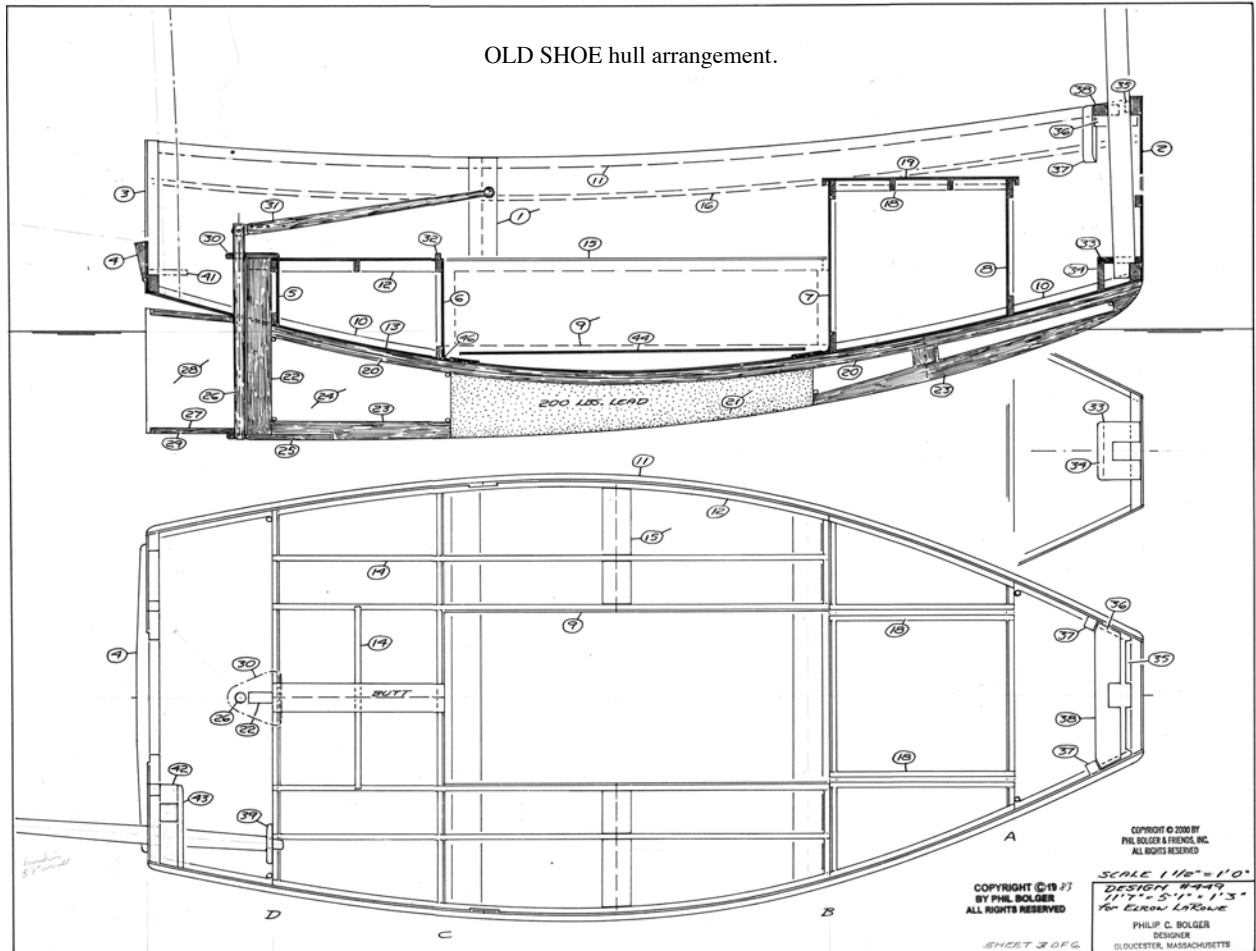
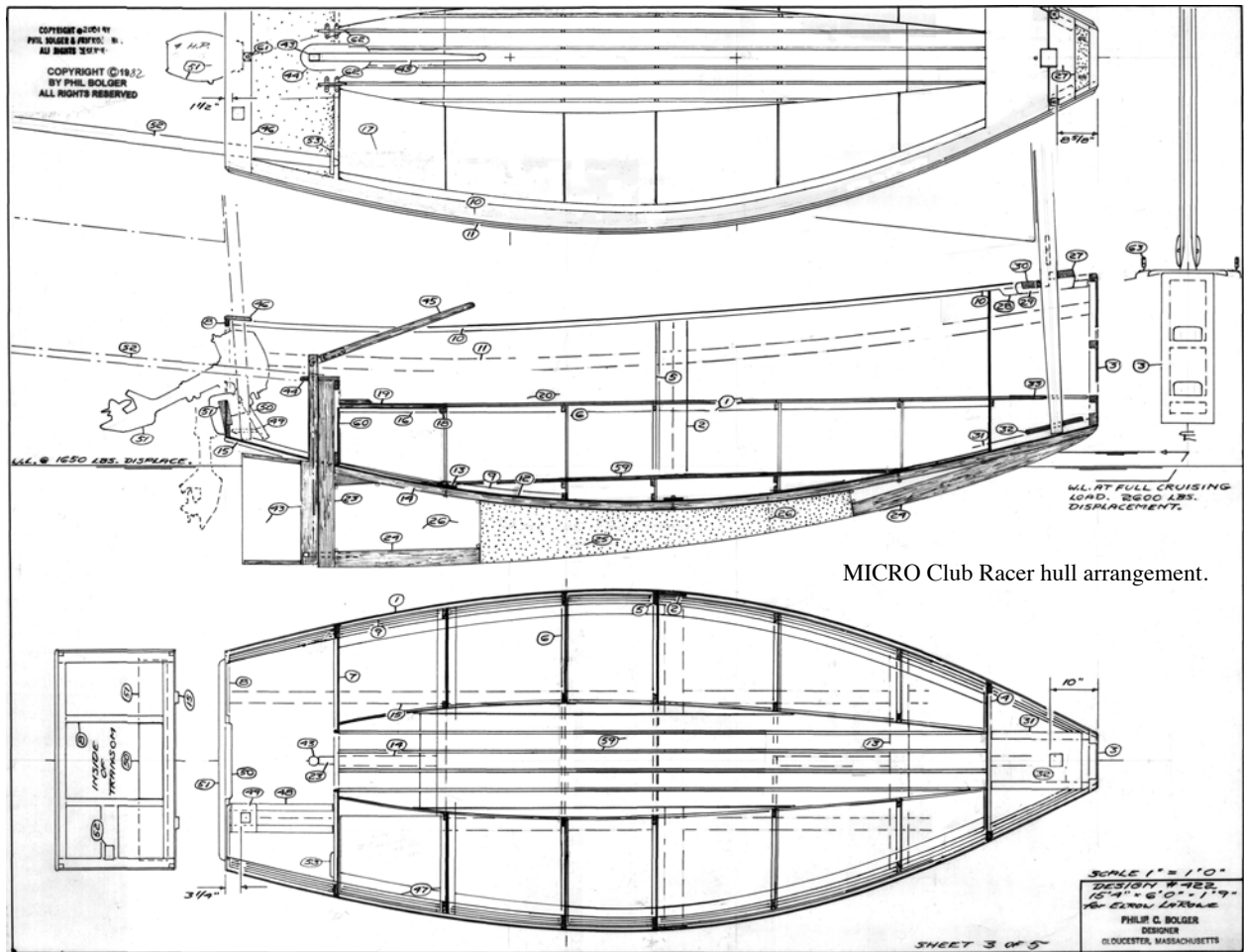
We'd want to pay careful attention to decent gaskets where you'd hinge a seat surface or three in order to keep your daysailing or cruising gear dry, all the way to allowing her on her beam ends without beginning to take on water into those volumes. In fact, it would be wise to take the rearmost and the foremost volumes under the seat and fill it with buoyancy foam to keep her afloat, no matter what. And one could consider whether the rear slop well could not be used for some of that as well, trading volumes for more storage under the seats.

But some would argue with some urgency that we'd want a two cooler box right

MICRO Club Racer.

Susan and John McDaniels' MICRO.





there, one side for beer on ice and the other side for bratwurst, burgers, flank steak, buns, ketchup, mustard, etc. With the mizzen boom to starboard, her port transom would seem like a prime location to mount a decent grill on an outrigger, gas or the much more adventurous charcoal type. Located right near her tiller, there will inevitably be disputes over priorities aboard, whether we'd sail the best race or have the best freshly grilled food.

Anyone doubtful about how exciting sailing this short and wide long keel cat yawl could possibly be, may want to consider just starting the charcoal grill reaching and running in a fresh breeze. But who'd want a mutiny from the beer and brats folks kind enough to come along to offer their stout counterweight to aid in MICRO's racing performance or so the likely polemics would go. Good thing that between the promising siz-

zling aft and three sheets to tend to, there'd be lots of things to do to keep the mind focused and morale up. Especially setting and managing that 65sf reaching spinnaker will keep someone or two on adequately high adrenaline levels as boosting her sail area from 210sf to 275sf of sail could make all the difference. With the crew's eyes close to the water, at maximum hull speed she'd impress with a solid white bow wave and a rising wake just reaching for the hot grill.

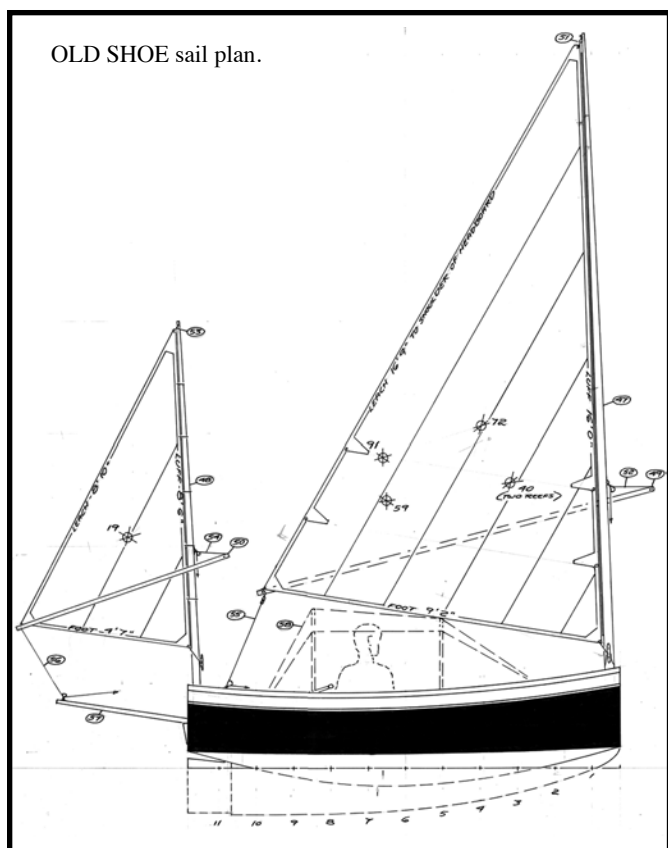
At the end of the racing season the boat with the most soot and grease spots on the mizzen, if not even a few burn holes in her mainsail from flying embers, could be considered the winner, whether it ever won enough races or not. Good times from togetherness, sailing and food, all aboard one small boat can indeed contrast sharply with some other folks' needle nosed definitions of club rac-

ing with statistics, carbon pieces and freshly starched sails.

Aboard MICRO Club Racer one may however want to make sure that if six typical brats and beer crew were to sail her, that with their weight on her windward side they don't take her mainmast clean out of her. Not making it over the finish line would not be the tragedy, but the dent that new stick will make in the beer budget...

If there is enough interest in this version, another sheet or two would be added to the MICRO plans, now at 11 sheets, available for \$250 to build one boat, sent rolled in a tube via priority mail.

PS: More images of OLD SHOE would be appreciated from owners/photographers. I'd rather not just download internet images without OK by owners.



OLD SHOE sailing with four adults.



A Graphic Report on Mystic Seaport and the Nautical Research Guild Conference Convened Therein, 2015

Some 125 members plus many spouses attended, with Canada well represented. The venue was a very nice and newly renovated Hilton perhaps a mile from the Seaport, but the hotel transport was available on short notice to ferry, if attendees did not have a personal vehicle.

Mystic is less than an hour's drive from airports in Providence and Hartford, but with no public transportation from those places. I wish to report that the Providence Airport (T.F. Greene-PVD, actually in Warwick, but in RI, a stroll gets you from city to city) is especially welcoming to nautical folks, with many classic boats on display inside; Herreshoff designs predominate.

Available tours were: The Mystic Collections Research Center (CRC) with models and library; The Boathall, watercraft collection, where historically significant small craft hulls and rigs are stored on racks with no intent to restore, only preserve; the iconic vessel, *Charles W. Morgan*; and the Henry B. DuPont Preservation Shipyard, where

work was being performed on the steamer *Sabina*, *Mayflower II*, *Emma C. Berry*, *Amistad*, and Danish Lighthouse Tender *Gerda III*, a small ship involved in historic rescue of about 300 Danish Jews, by 19-year-old Henny Sinding, daughter of the boat's manager, and a crew of four seamen.

Vendors attending were: Syren (fittings); Sea Fever Books; Crown Timberyard; BlueJacket; Byrnes Model Machines; SeaWatch Books; and Ship Ahoy Models and Miniatures. A number of fine models were on display adjacent to the conference room/dining area.

The area is, of course, the nuts, maritime-wise.

Presentations consisted of: Paul O'Pecko on Conducting Research at Mystic. Kroum Batchvarov on Researching 17th century Dutch and French warships; Dana Hewson and Quentin Snediker on Restoration of the *Morgan*; and Grant Walker on the Rogers Collection.

Technical session subjects were on: Airbrushes and airbrushing; Oar-making; Rigging shortcuts;

and Sail making, using laminated silkspan.

The general tour of the Seaport waterfront displays many preservations afloat or covered on the hard for the winter: Fishing Schooner *L.A. Dunton*; Eastern-rig Dragger *Roam*; Fishing Sloop *Emma C. Berry*, Ship *Joseph Conrad*, whaleboats, Sandbagger *Ann*, *Amistad*, Tugboat *Kingston II*, a New Haven Sharpie and other small classics besides the *C.W. Morgan*.

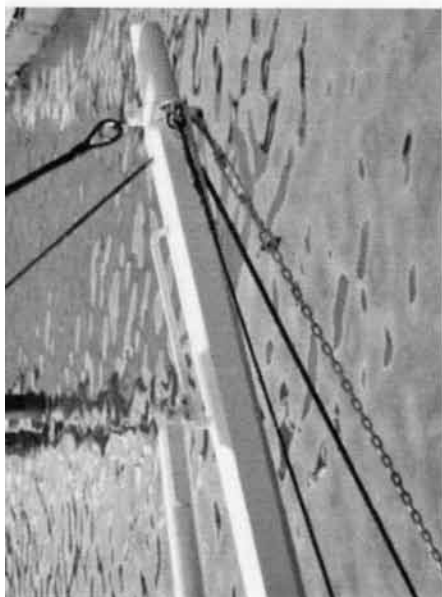
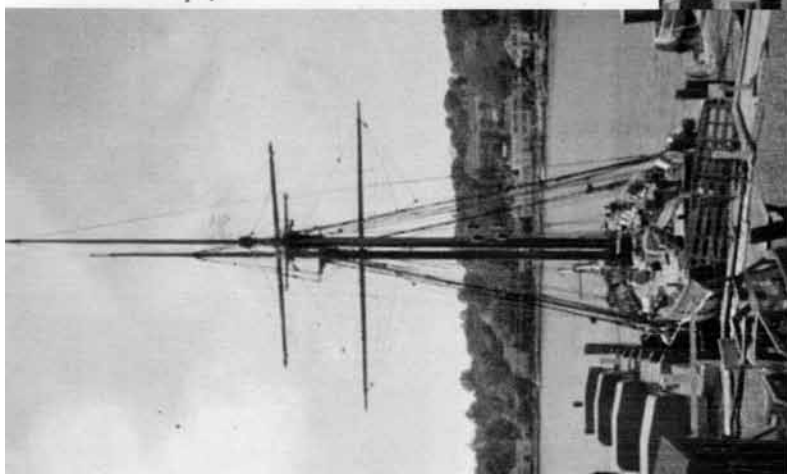
In addition, there is an entire village of chandleries, print shops, life-saving station; ropewalk, sail loft, blacksmith, bank, tavern, oystering shed, church, chapel, etc, as well as the Maritime Art Gallery, with paintings, photos and models.

Finally, the conference dinner presentation was given by prominent maritime artist, Russ Kramer, formerly of St. Pete, now a Mystic resident.

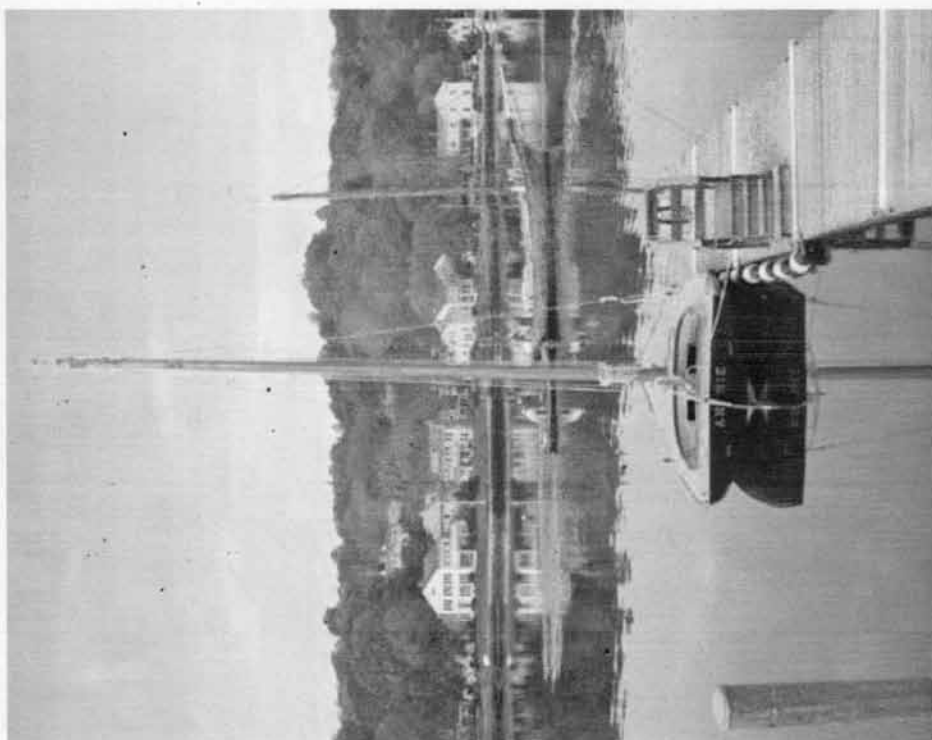
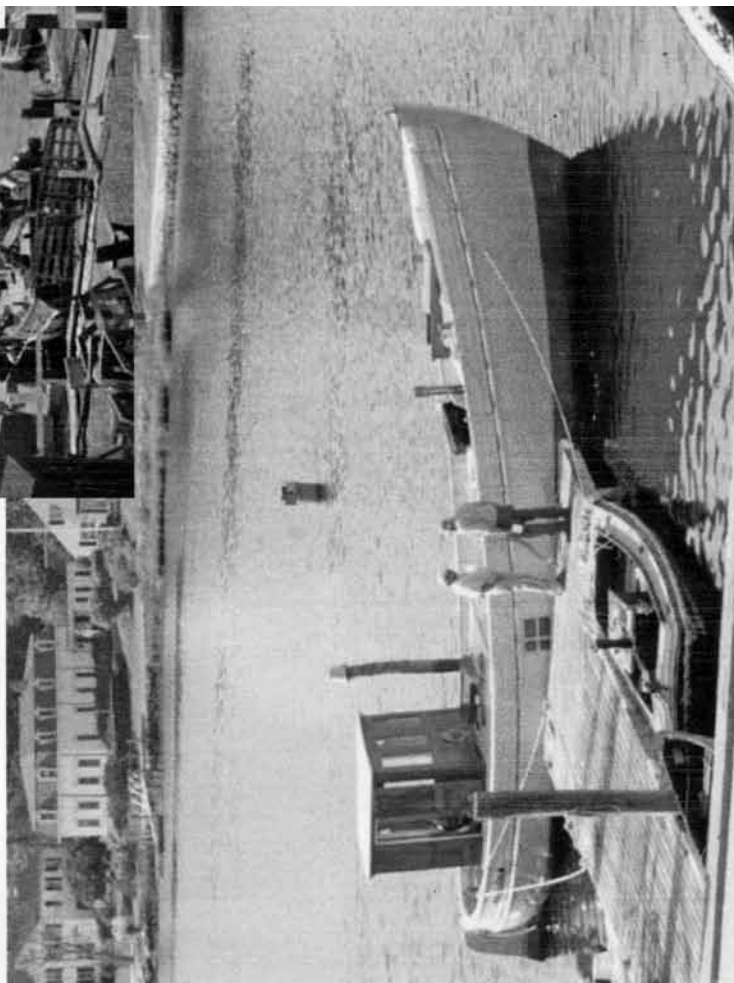
I, Sec/Ed, went on, at the end of the conference, to meet up with a buddy and tour the New Bedford Whaling Museum, much expanded from my last visit, perhaps 25 years ago. — *Irwin Schuster*

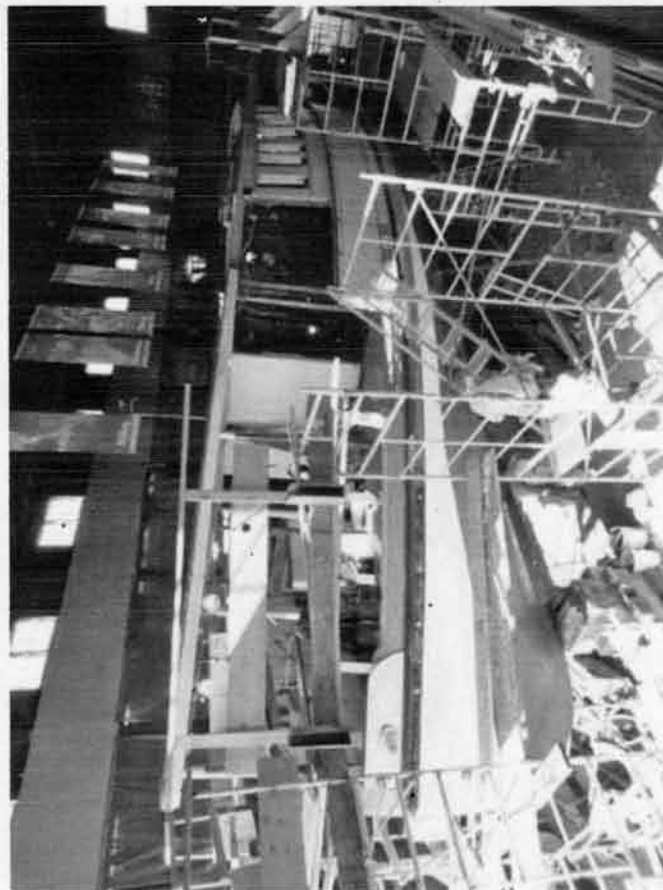
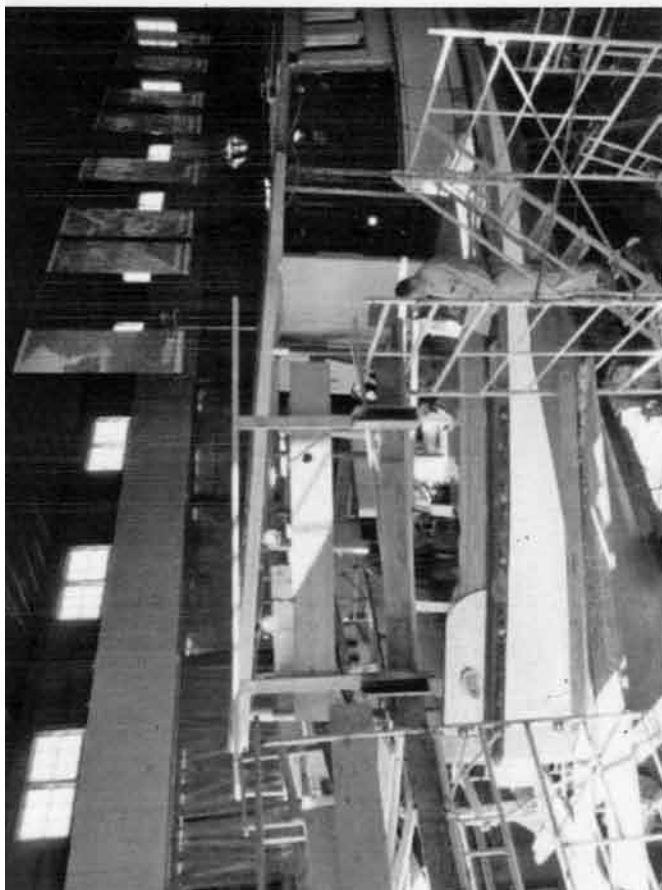
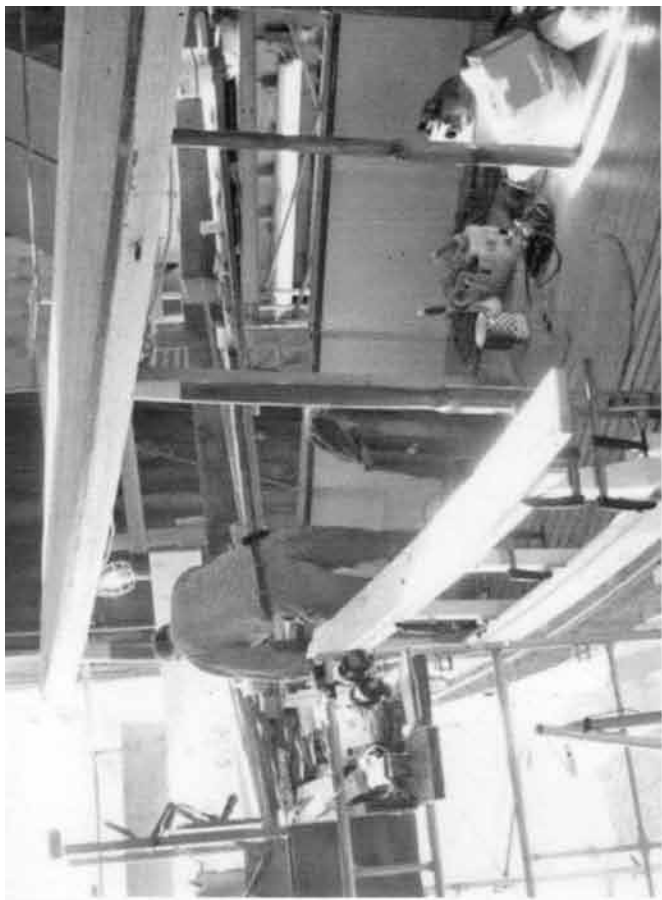


One of the Morgan's boats.

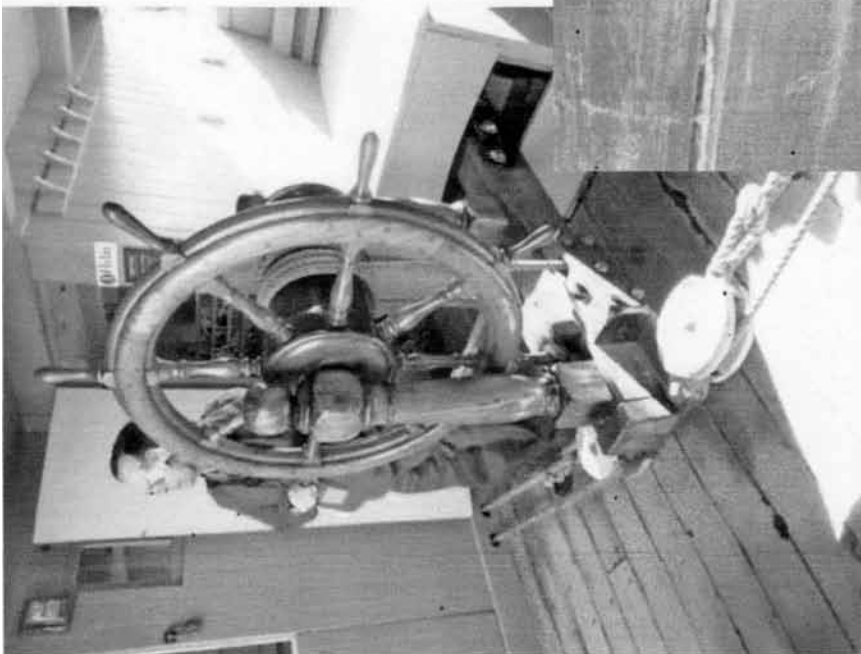
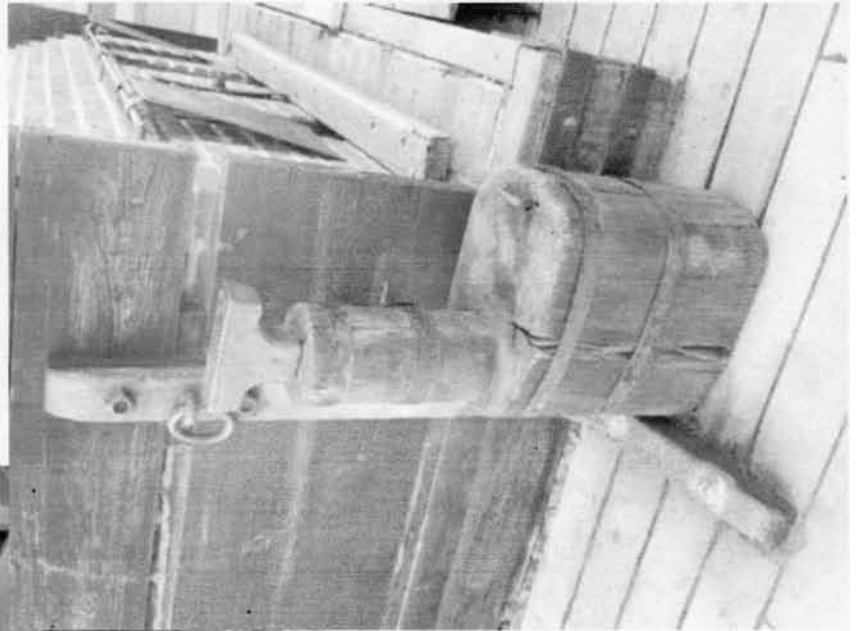
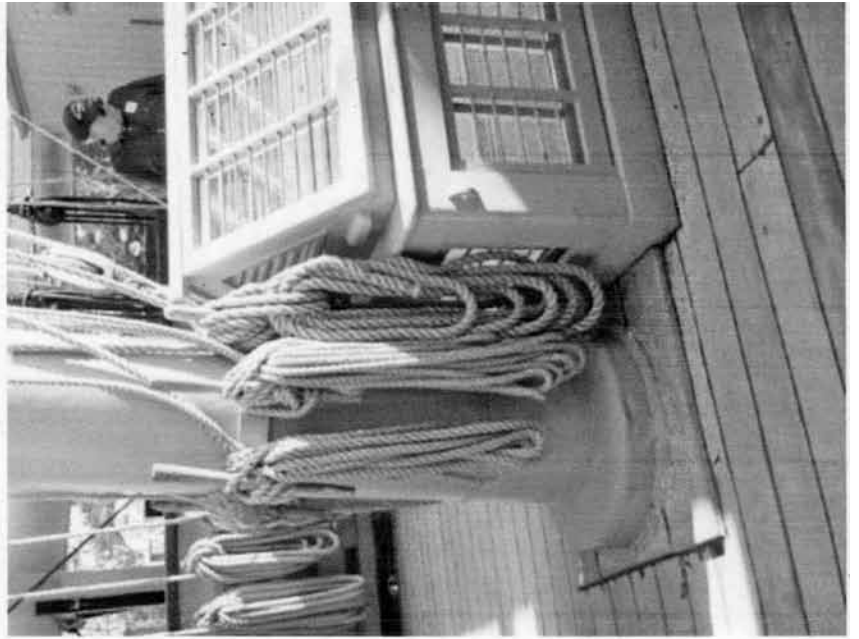
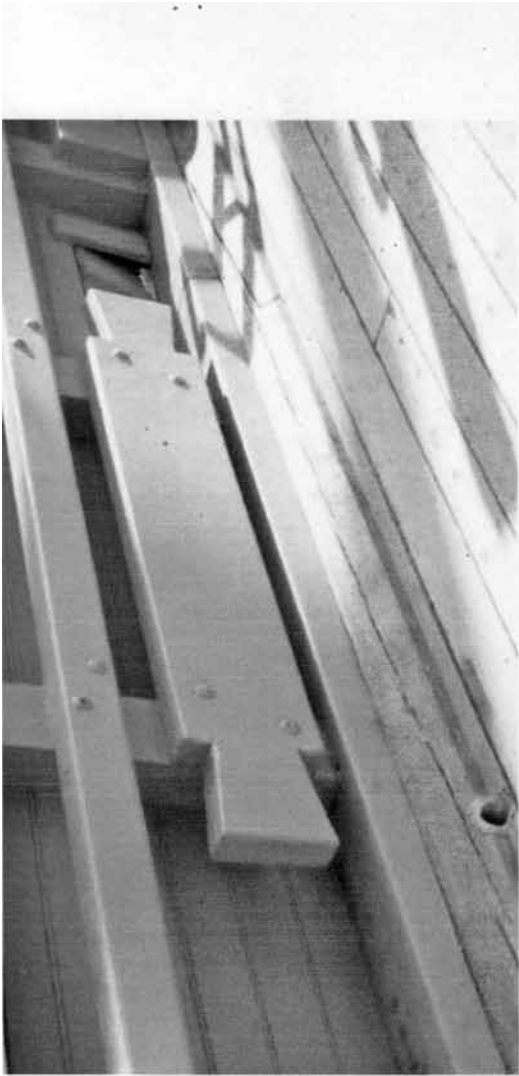


Lower left, Sandbagger Annie with Emma C. Berry off her bow, being moved up river. Upper left, Berry details. Right, *Amistad*, and below, the heroic little *Gerda III*.

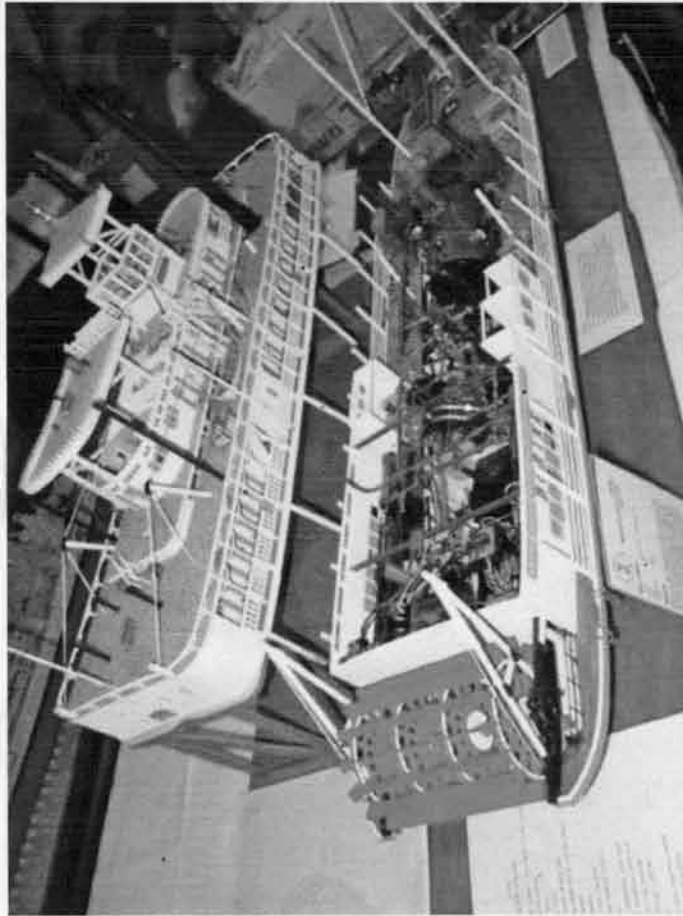
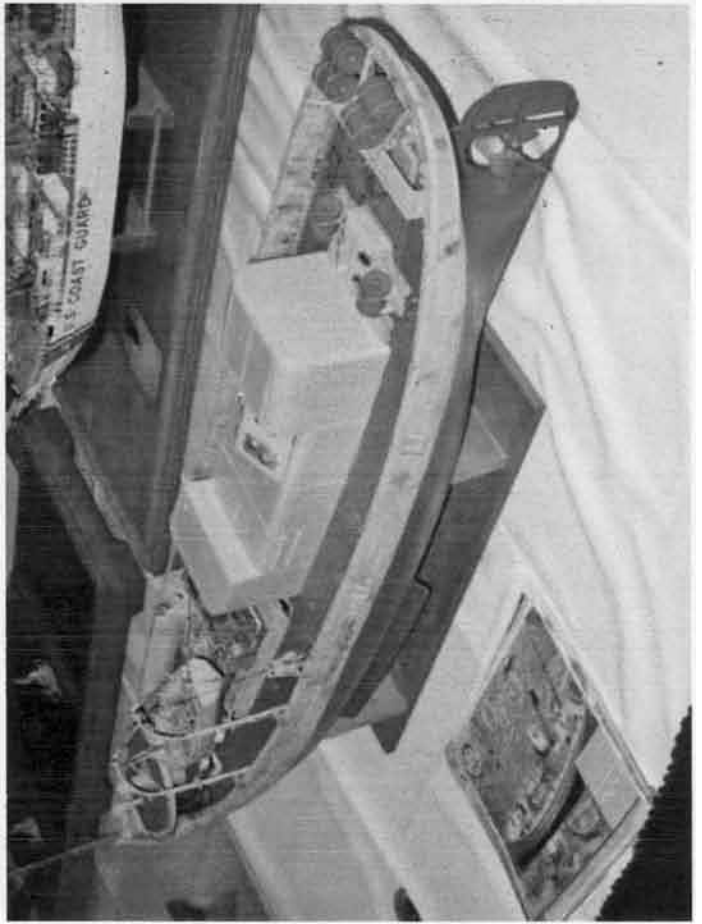




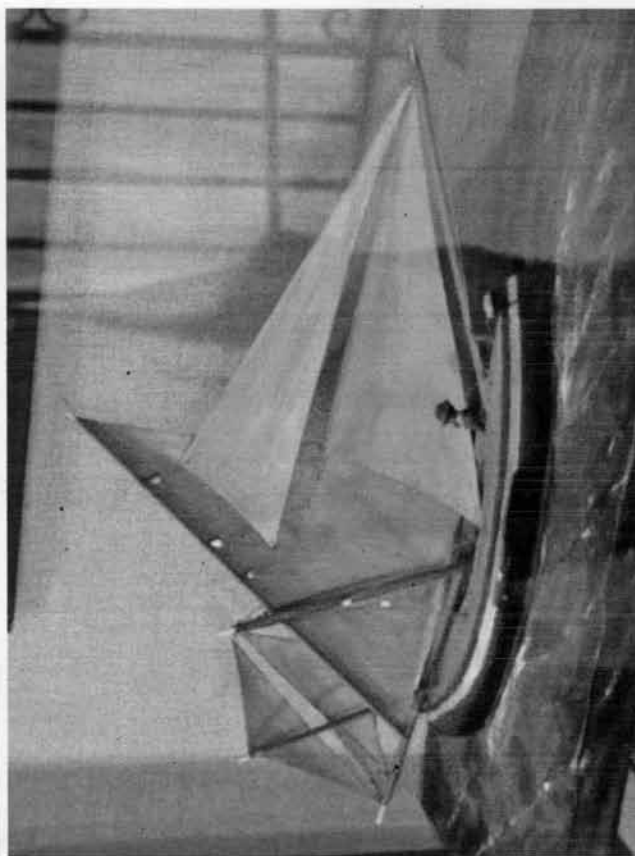
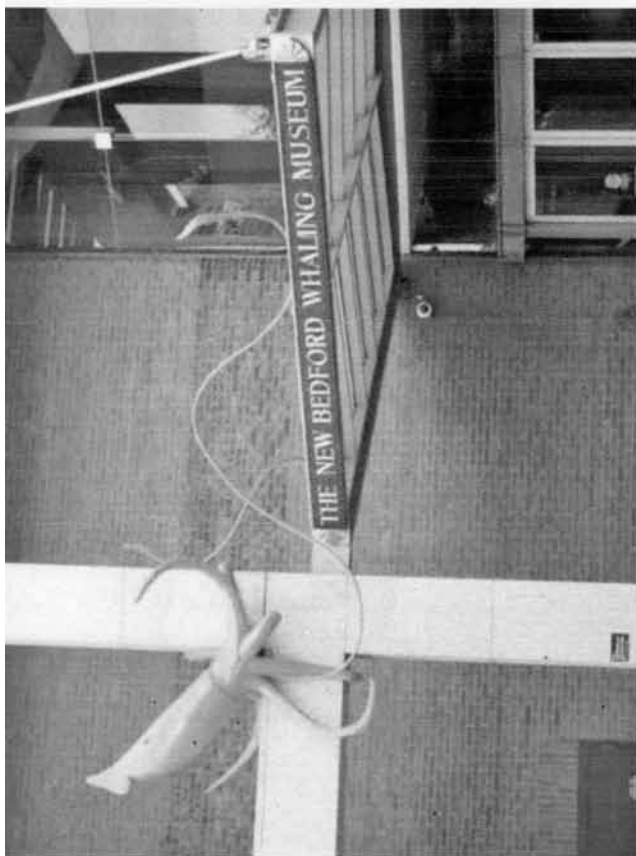
Renovation of *Sabina*, and one of her ports, heaving up shavings.



Details aboard *Charles W. Morgan*, clockwise from above; her wheel, which, if you did not recognize, please back away from this tract. A sturdy cavel cleat; the standard challenging collection of belayed lines, and finally a genuine Whatzit accessory to the try-works.



Hannah is a model currently in storage in the CRC (remember? that's The Mystic Collections Research Center). The contract for sharing one particular exhibit dictated that even the shipping crates be stored in a controlled environment so as not to introduce bugs when the artifacts are returned. The other two are models brought for display by conference attendees.



A bit of whimsy in the identification of this fine old institution (which claims the world's largest ship model with an 89-foot, half-scale whaling bark, *Lagoda*. Upper right, a diorama by Erik Romberg **SR**. Lower left, a new sailing canoe rig on me, as part of the Portuguese whaling exhibit. Next, an interesting dugout called an Ulu, from Panama, obviously hewn with metal tools.

In 2006 I wrote to Mr Hicks suggesting a now and then column of information and ideas based on my some 50 years of messing about in boats. In my letter I mentioned that my wife and I had nine boats in our first six years of marriage. Mr Hicks found both the column idea and the boat sequence interesting. When we started putting the material together for the first column, my wife and I discovered that we had ten boats in the first six years, not counting the one I was building when we got married or the one lost when the boat builder went bankrupt before the boat was completed.

I have been enjoying boats in one form or another for most of my life. I have been involved with power (inboard and outboard), sail (monohull and multihull), rowboats (lakes) and canoes (local all day river trips). My boating experience is on the Gulf Coast of Florida (Sarasota/Tampa Bay and Apalachee Bay). When Judy married me in 1968 I was building a sailboard, a good clue that we would be involved with boats. In some cases the boats were basket cases which were purchased for small sums of money and then repaired/rebuilt, enjoyed and sold.

This approach gave us a chance to try out a number of different kinds of boats with minimal monetary investment. In all our "fleet" has included some 20 boats of different types (power, paddle or sail). At present, and part of the count, we have a Sisu 26 (inboard diesel) and a skiff. And we are still learning about boating either by experience, reading other people's accounts of events or listening to other people's experiences at meetings and socials.

A small sailboard design is not really suitable for two adults so we went looking for something bigger. The result was a used Aquacat purchased from a lawyer. One of the benefits of this purchase was that the lawyer wrote out the bill of sale and I kept a copy. It was in nice legalize. The Aquacat was suitable for the two of us to sail in Apalachee Bay, although we got out now and then and pushed when the water became too thin.

Since the time Mr Hicks was kind enough to include my material, I have been writing about various aspects of boating. I entered the world of boating in the early 1950s when I learned to sail an Optimist Pram. At the time there was a pram fleet based at the Palmetto side of the Bradenton River where the old ferry dock was located.



The prams were sponsored by local businesses whose names appeared on the sides of the prams.

Wanting to go fishing, my father found an old power boat that was a bit short for the inboard he wanted to use and we both learned to fiberglass as part of the rebuilding effort. Installing a Phantom Grey Marine engine in the boat was another learning experience. Since my father had been a long distance truck driver, a welder, a mechanic, a carpenter and finally a general housing contractor, I learned a lot of stuff as I was growing up. While in high school, I helped my father build houses. I was my father's gofer and was involved in all aspects of residential house construction, helping where needed. Before it was over I had learned rough and finish carpentry, plumbing, house wiring, block laying, painting, etc. Little did I know that most of these skills would come in handy later in life when I got into messing about in boats.

When I went to college (Florida State University) I became involved with the FSU Sailing Association. We were sailing FJs in Lake Bradford. When I was learning to sail the pram, the volunteer instructors floated around in small boats giving us instructions. The pram, due to its simplicity, was a good training boat. Lake Bradford has a lot of shallow areas (depending on the rainfall) and we could instruct beginners in the FJs by standing about waist deep in the lake and helping as needed. It was an interesting way to teach sailing.

Knowing that I was interested in boating, a member of the United States Power Squadron invited me to join the local squadron. Over the following years I took all the courses the group had to offer and learned a great many things about safe boating and boat operation in general. In addition to seamanship, the use of charts and the like, I also learned celestial navigation (I still have my sextant). The courses offered by this organization were very

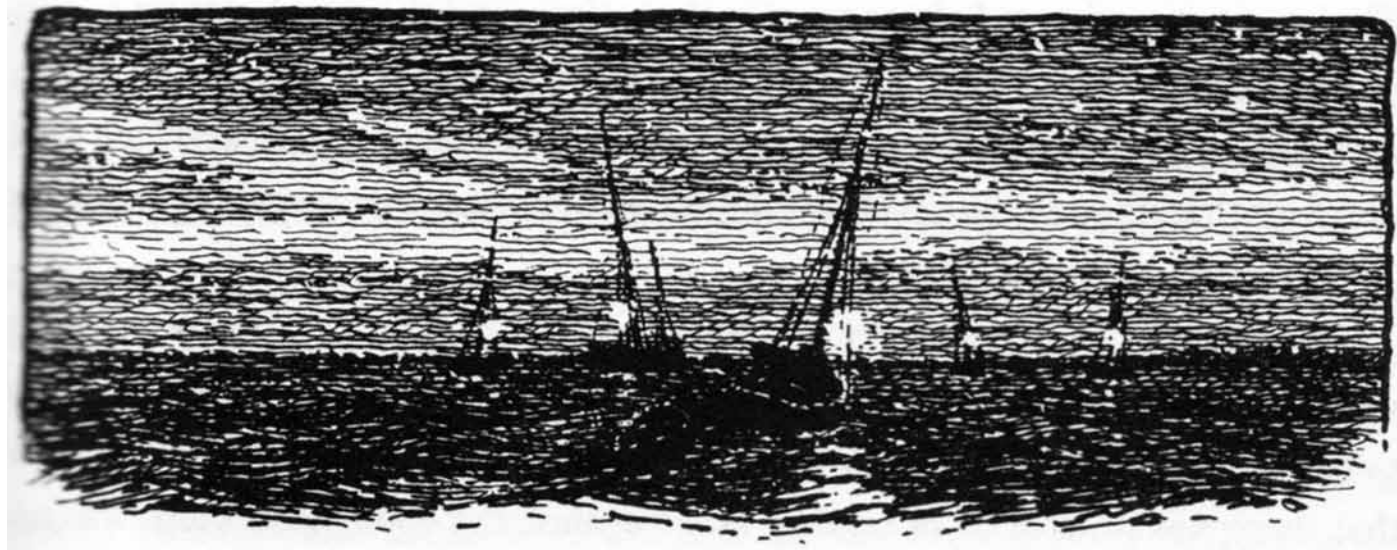
useful and I recommend them to anyone interested in learning about boating.

One of the interesting aspects about boating is that one never stops learning. There are books on various aspects of all the items that go into a boat, how to sail or motor a given boat and the illustrative stories from others who have "been there and done that." There are also websites devoted to given boats or a sailing areas where you can learn more about the subject.

One thing learned early in sailing is the affect of the set and drift of tidal currents. In our part of Apalachee Bay the tidal current plays a major role in the direction (and speed) a sailboat is going, especially in light air. We used to sail a Ranger 26 and we would have the sails set, the boat "moving" and a crab pot float going past us as the boat went backward in the tidal current on a light air day.

A friend took his Grand Banks 32 to the Bahamas. To get to his destination he motored southeast out of a Florida east coast port, as the Gulf Stream would be moving his boat northward at a steady rate. He had to allow for the set and drift of the Stream to reach his destination in a timely manner. Learning about set and drift had relevance to flying a small plane. In fact, I have a device to calculate the direction the plane should be headed to have the proper course over the ground to get to the next airport before the plane was low on fuel. The device can also be used on the water if you know the set and drift the current you will be experiencing, you can get that information from the charts on the subject produced by NOAA.

Before LORAN C and GPS, one figured out the set and drift affecting the boat by taking bearings on objects along the shore. Most charts showed all tall objects that could be seen from offshore. Radio towers and water towers were two prominent objects. One could also take bearings from navigation aids in sight. After taking the bearings, a line of position (LOP) could be plotted on the paper chart showing the locations where the bearings were taken. From a series of such bearings one could calculate any set and drift that was influencing the boats course over ground (COG) and adjust the boat's heading accordingly. With today's technology, one can see what is going on much more quickly without the need of the chart, the protractor and the straight edge (but it is nice to have the backup skill and equipment).





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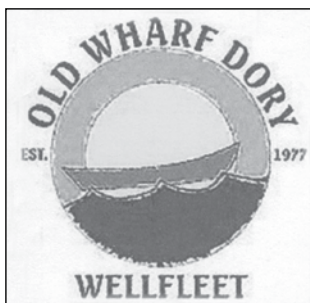
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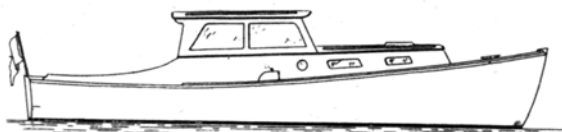


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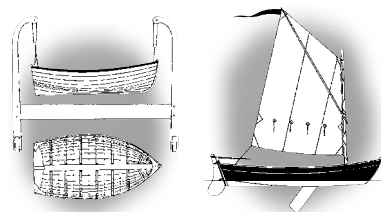
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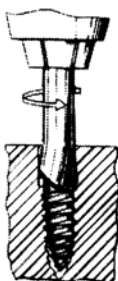
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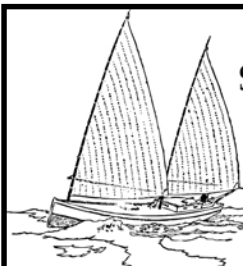
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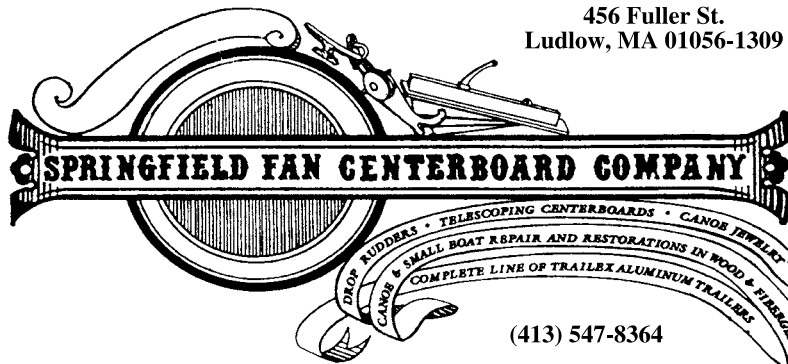
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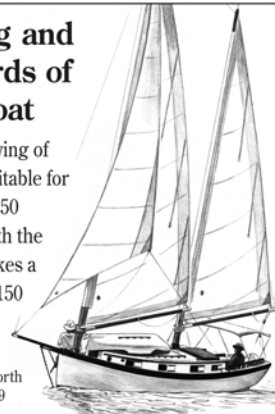
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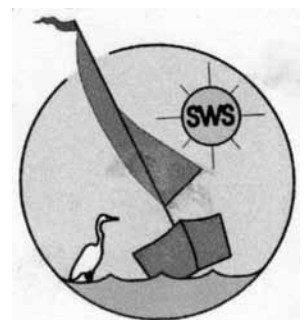
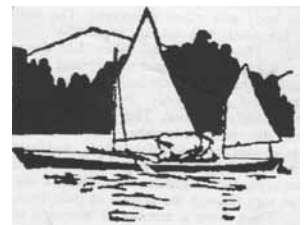
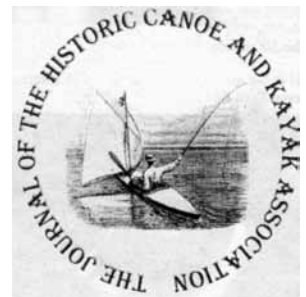
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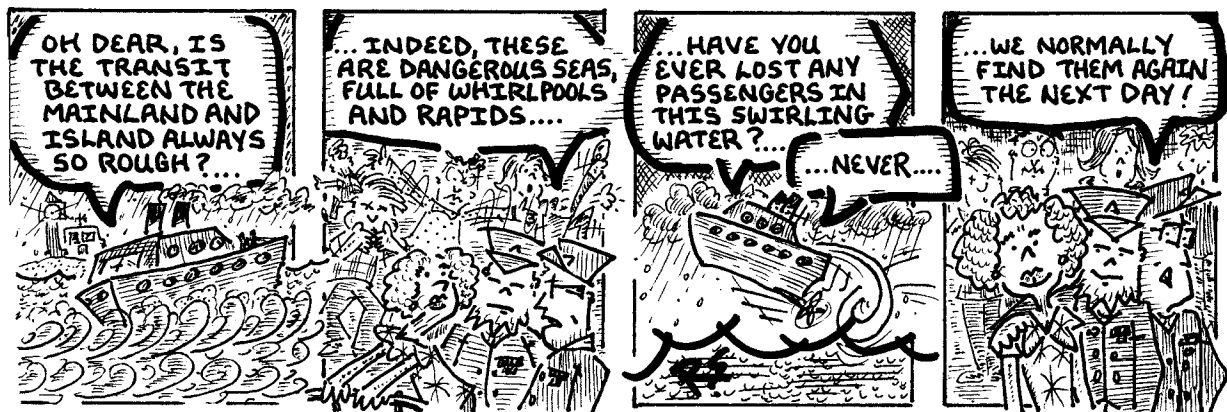
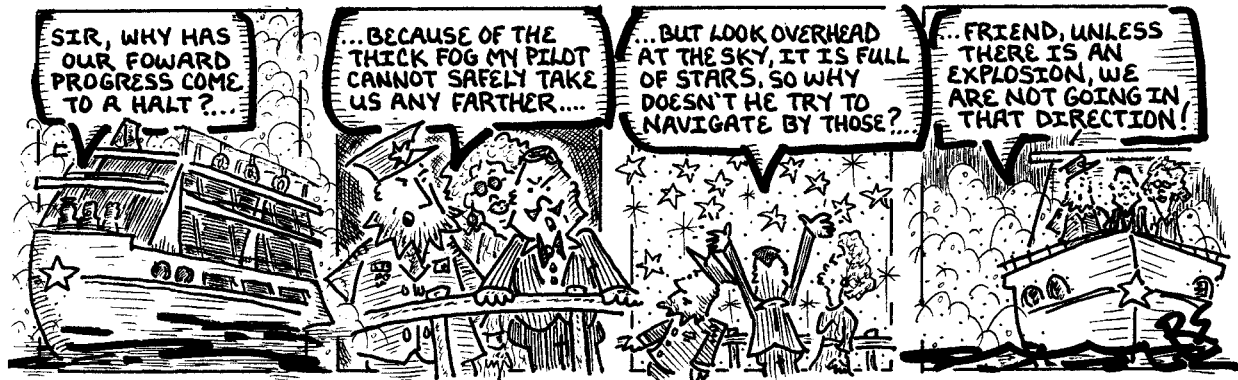
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